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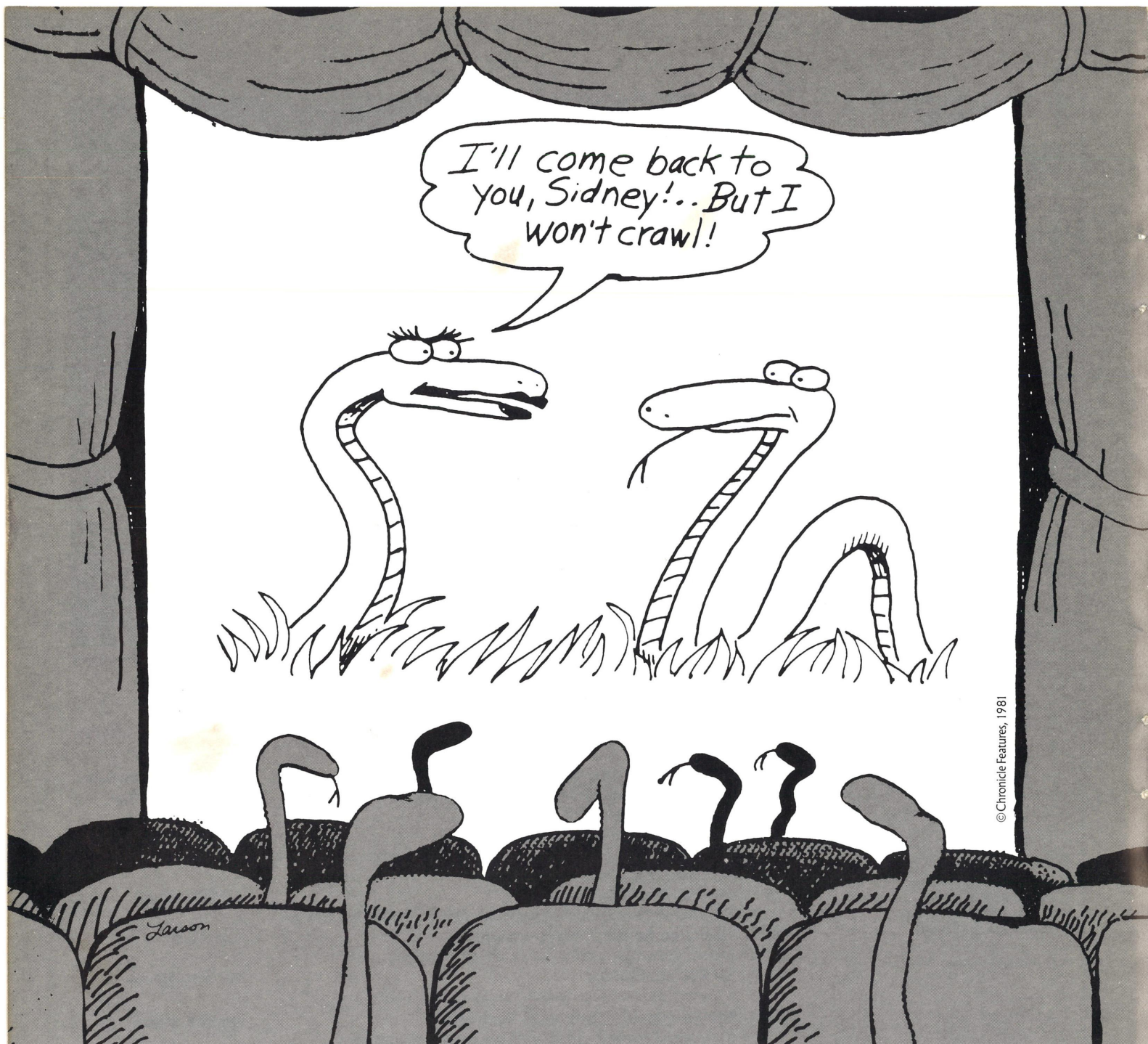
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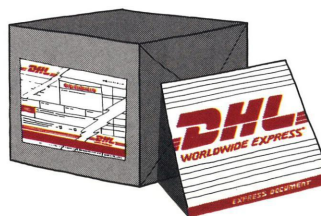
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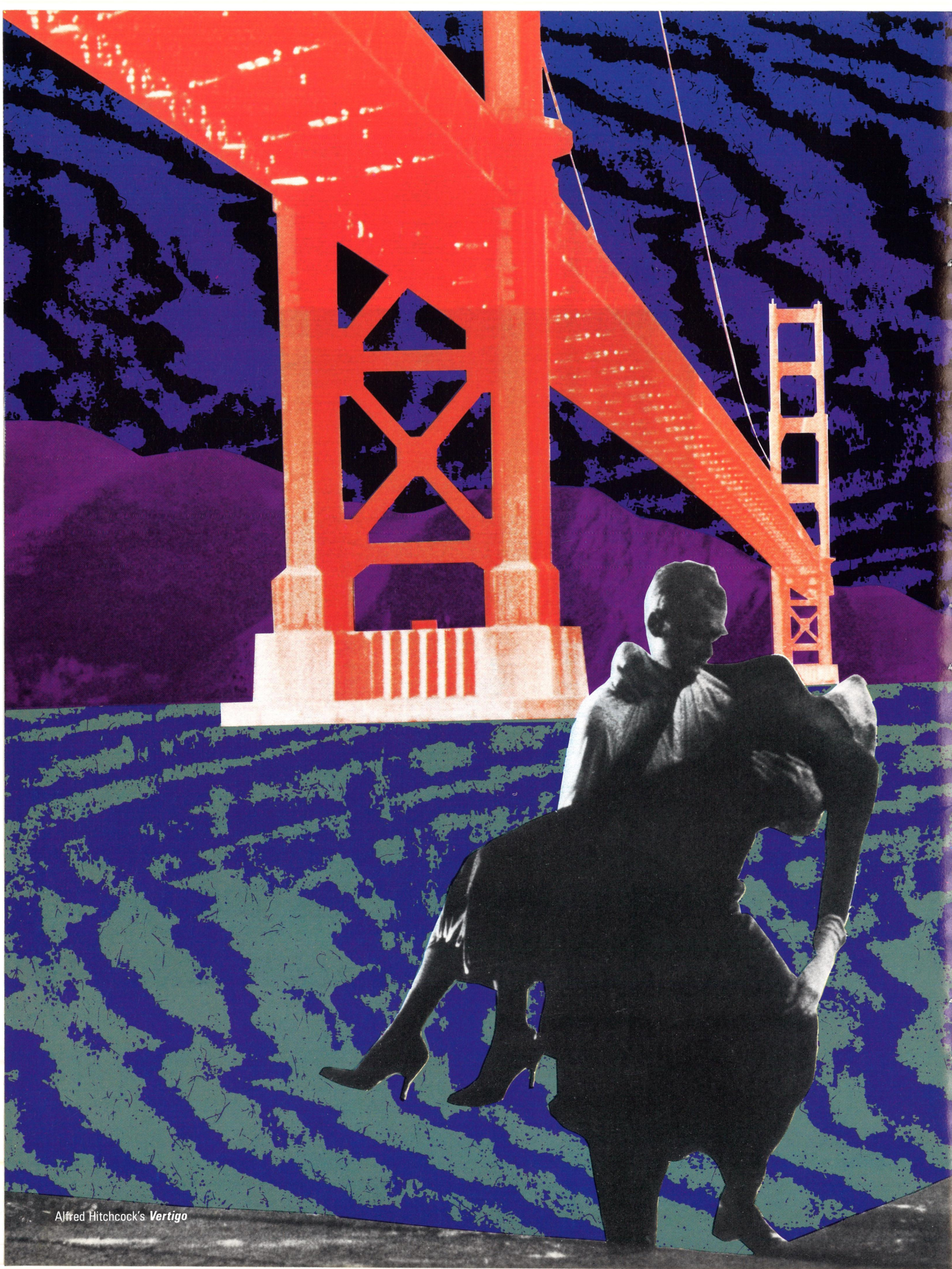
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Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo*

SAN FRANCISCO:

City of Broken Dreams

By Michael Goodwin and Naomi Wise

Sometimes San Francisco seems like a city of cinematic ghosts. Can you cross the intersection of Geary and Stockton without looking for Jimmy Stewart wandering out of Union Square in a daze? Or enter Fort Point without thinking of Lee Marvin hiding in the darkness high above? Or climb down the Filbert Steps without looking for Bogey, swathed in bandages, stumbling up?

San Francisco, with its picture-postcard vistas and dramatic locations, has always been a favorite setting for filmmakers; a full list of the films that have been shot here (or set here) would go on for pages. But that list is beside the point. Too often, shooting a film in San Francisco is just a cheap way to punch up the visuals; think of *Foul Play* or *Woman in Red*. Most films set in San Francisco could be shot anywhere.

But how about the films that could not have been shot anywhere else, those that use San Francisco as a character, an idea, a visual metaphor?

FRONTIER BOOM TOWN

From the earliest days of the movies to the latest, San Francisco has been pictured as a brawling, boozy, free and easy town where miners, mobsters, and Minneapolis tourists part with their money. At the same time, like any frontier town, it's a place of unlimited opportunity, the true West, where the people who work (or dream) hard enough can get what they want.

Greed: In Erich Von Stroheim's masterpiece, a Polk Street dentist with an avaricious wife catches the gold bug and loses everything. The youthful city is torn between bustling middle-class respectability and gold fever. Hasn't changed much since.

San Francisco: In W.S. Van Dyke's film, Jeanette MacDonald, a nice girl, learns to belt out the title tune in down-and-dirty dance-hall style, while cynical impresario Clark Gable discovers the serious side of love. The city's power to destroy, transform, and reinvent (disguised here as the Big Quake) is seen as a positive force, freeing the inhibited and civilizing the wild.

Barbary Coast: Another brawling frontier town, this time courtesy of Howard Hawks. And once again it's a magic land of transformation, as cynical fortune-hunter Miriam Hopkins takes a job as saloon hostess (and mistress) for the rapacious Edward G. Robinson—only to discover gold-digging poet Joel McCrae (the first beatnik?) and a way out.

Dirty Harry: Like any frontier town, San Francisco draws its share of outlaws—and lawmen. Harry Callahan has seen more than enough of the city's lawless underbelly and longs for the vigilante powers of a Wild West sheriff. Unfortunately, he's only a cop trapped in a nest of knee-jerk liberals. Don Siegel's San Francisco partakes of another subgenre, San Francisco as "kook's paradise," except that in this case the kook is a mass murderer who wears an upside-down peace symbol belt-buckle.

Gentleman Jim: Erroll Flynn, a mannerly brawler, wins the championship in Raoul Walsh's rollicking portrait of a would-be-bourgeois caught in the sporting life of turn-of-the-century San Francisco. Corbett is a rough-and-tumble, working-class hero on his way to yupification. What could be more pertinent today?

KOOK'S PARADISE

From an "anything goes" frontier town at the edge of America, San Francisco has evolved into one of the most tolerant sanctu-



Steven Okazaki's *Living on Tokyo Time*

aries for semicivilized bohemians in the world. Numerous movies have portrayed the city as a paradise for kooks. In the fifties, Hollywood sold San Francisco as a beatnik town with *The Beat Generation* and *The Subterraneans*; a few years later, the studios were equally quick to cash in on hippies, radicals, and punks.

Psych-Out: Thanks to fine documentary footage shot by Laszlo Kovacs in 1967, Richard Rush's portrait of sixties flower children may cause nostalgic sighs in spite of its silly plot and clichéd characters. Susan Strasberg plays a deaf-mute runaway who finds a haven in the Haight; a very young Jack Nicholson is her protector, and Bruce Dern is her sweet, space-case brother. The STP freak-out ending seems tacked-on—but then, they always were.

Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home: "Save the whales—or else!" is the motto of this amiable saga in which present-day San Francisco plays Ectopia, complete with an independent heroine who cares more for whales than romance. The natives are so tolerant they don't even blink when an assorted batch of Star Trek refugees—some in uniform, some in mufti, and a caffeinated Spock with a white head-band hiding his ears—stand around on a North Beach street corner looking lost like any other tourist.

GATEWAY TO THE EAST

New York's next-door-neighbor is Europe; ours is Asia. Films set in San Francisco have long acknowledged a powerful oriental influence. Although some have used it exploitatively, others (especially those from Asian-American filmmakers) have dealt more honestly with the intimate interface between the cultures.

Chan is Missing: Wayne Wang's version of "Asian mystery" in San Francisco is realistic and down-to-earth: An immigrant taxi driver disappears with \$4,000 loaned to him by two colleagues, who try to track him down through the by-ways of our genuine (rather than gussied-up) Chinatown.

Dim Sum: This slice of Chinese-American life in San Francisco, also by Wang, is a demystification of the Asian community, a translation (at long last) of what those ladies with shopping bags on the #30 Stockton and the #1 Clement are probably talking about. ("When's my daughter gonna get married already?")

Hammett: Shot on airless studio sets, Wim Wenders' imaginary tale of Dashiell Hammett as a private eye in San Francisco is set largely in a Chinatown of the mind, a city full of salacious Disneyland Dragon Ladies and inscrutable Asian mobsters, practicing vices no Westerner would dream of. Is this the way literate tourists see us?

Living on Tokyo Time: The Bay Area's Steven Okazaki depicts the difference between Japanese and Japanese-American in a culture-clashed romance between a stolid second-generation punk rocker and a lovely illegal immigrant. The film also partakes of the theme of San Francisco as a haven; except for the INS bureaucrats, nearly all the San Franciscans, every race, go out of their way to give help and advice.

Big Trouble in Little China: "This is like some radical Alice in Wonderland," says Kurt Russell, as he discovers a magical world of sorcerers and Chinese vampires beneath San Francisco's Chinatown. Actually, John Carpenter's underrated fantasy is a loving pastiche of Hong Kong Kung Fu flicks (complete with

impossible acrobatics and loony special effects), Hammett's "Dead Yellow Women," a *soupçon* of Fu Manchu, and a surprisingly well-rehearsed compendium of Oriental folklore. Although it was mostly shot in LA's Chinatown, the film wouldn't work unless it were set here. Very little is explained; it's *assumed* that we are familiar with Oriental culture. Only in San Francisco.

FOGGY REFUGE

"I like it when life's hidden," says a dance-hall dame, slipping into the fog in *Barbary Coast*. "It gives you a chance to imagine nice things—nicer than they are." San Francisco has always been a haven for the lost and the desperate—and a hiding place at the edge of the world for human monsters. In a seaport town where the rules are loose, the fog hides everything.

The Maltese Falcon: John Huston's masterful version of Dashiell Hammett's novel starts with an atmospheric murder. When the fog lifts, an unsavory collection of liars and criminals is revealed—and Sam Spade, an honest shamus hiding behind a facade of corruption.

The Lineup: In this dark thriller from Don Siegel, the bad guys are crazed intellectuals on

Jeanette MacDonald in *San Francisco*





Wayne Wang's *Chan is Missing*

the trail of a missing dope shipment; they even write down their victims' last words as some kind of scholarly exercise. The gangsters blend into mid-fifties Frisco perfectly; the only time you can tell they're out-of-towners is when they almost drive off the stub-end of the Embarcadero Freeway.

Dark Passage: When an innocent con escapes from San Quentin, almost everyone he meets in San Francisco tries to help him—although most think he's guilty. Delmer Daves' adaptation of David Goodis' *noirish* novel stars Bogart and Bacall, and moves like a dream from bright days on upper Montgomery to rainy nights on then-thriving Market Street. Everyone complains the "people *used* to care about each other"—but the whole point here is that they still do.

DANGEROUS ILLUSIONS

Sometimes San Francisco is seen as a *bad* dream, a glamorous lure to seduce and destroy the unwary, its fog a cloud of confusion. The City as femme fatale.

The Lady From Shanghai: The Funhouse at Playland is the central metaphor for San Francisco in Orson Welles' superb *film noir* treatment. What looks like a place of innocent amusement is dangerously disorienting, its mirrors forming a web of false images in which the bewildered hero is caught like a fly. You thought they tore the Funhouse down? Look around.

Vertigo: In this ultimate San Francisco movie, Hitchcock swathes the city and his sad, fragile heroine in the trappings of romantic fantasy. But the heroine isn't really sad, or fragile, or even a heroine—and the haunted hero, driven mad by the cruel reality hidden beneath the fantasy, loses himself.

The Conversation: The central image of Francis Coppola's bleak tale of electronic invasion is that of a young couple strolling in Union

Square—their every word recorded by the bugging equipment of a private eye, who's bugged in turn by his own moral confusion. There's no safety in this film. The young lovers are neither innocent nor good. Nothing is as it seems. Behind the romantic fog lurks corporate San Francisco, competitive and cruel.

Point Blank: "Did it happen? A dream, a dream," murmurs Lee Marvin at the beginning of John Boorman's hallucinatory thriller. The plot (which unwinds mostly in Los Angeles) is a mystic circle that begins in Alcatraz and ends at Fort Point—and may actually be the last reverie of a dying con. A thread of betrayal holds the film together, leading inevitably back to the Bay Area.

Petulia: In Richard Lester's sad, bluesy love story, the Grateful Dead make sweet music on a street-corner as a free-spirited young beauty (Julie Christie) wanders by with her lover (George C. Scott). But the "kook" is actually an abused wife, neither free nor loving. Trapped by the wealth and power of her violent husband's family, she abandons her lover. This San Francisco belongs not to the flower children, but to the rich, powerful people who've almost ruled it.

POISONED UTOPIA

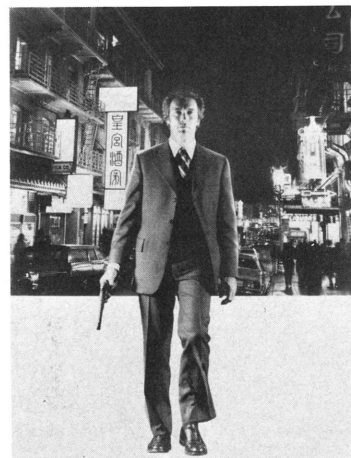
Sometimes San Francisco is a stand-in for Paradise or something very close to it—except there's always a snake in the Panhandle.

Time After Time: When Jack the Ripper (David Warner) flees in H.G. Wells' brand new time machine, Wells (Malcolm McDowell) fears he'll cause havoc in the peaceable "Utopia" of the future. Instead of Utopia, however, the film finds present-day San Francisco a mixed bag. Wells loves the clean, luxurious modernity of the Marina district; the Ripper feels right at home on Broadway's topless strip. Nicholas Meyer gives us a complicated, surprisingly balanced vision of a world in which war is a constant.

The Birds: Mostly shot in Bodega Bay, this modern Hitchcock horror film is set in motion when a brittle San Francisco socialite enters a Union Street pet shop to buy a pair of lovebirds. Obviously, Tippi's deadly disease was contracted in shallow, sophisticated Baghdad By the Bay. You didn't think those birds were attacking for no reason, did you?

Invasion of the Body Snatchers: "I've lived in this city all my life," says Brooke Adams, "but today, somehow, I felt everything changed. People were different. It was a nightmare. It was like the whole city had changed overnight." Phil Kaufman's grim vision of the yuppification of San Francisco is a gloss on Don Siegel's original. Ectopia turns into Trans-america-world before our eyes. (Notice how many of Kaufman's shots feature the Pyramid.) A powerfully moving extrapolation of one man's realization that the seventies would not blow over.

D.O.A.: A small-town businessman leaves his nagging secretary/girlfriend behind and comes to the City expecting a good time. There's poison in his cocktail, though, and the rest of Rudolph Maté's film finds him traveling through California trying to find out who has



Clint Eastwood in San Francisco's Chinatown

tried to kill him and why. This grim fable of real life (we're all poisoned, all dying), makes San Francisco seem unbearably desirable—even as it slips away.

END OF THE LINE

Is there a pattern? One thing all these films tell us is that San Francisco wears many masks. Looking at all the masks and meanings, you can see something else, one odd thing seems to stand out: Almost all the important cinematic portrayals of San Francisco are rather sad—a portrayal of broken dreams. Maybe that's not so odd after all. We do live in the City at the End of the Line. ■

Naomi Wise is film critic for *San Francisco Focus Magazine*. Michael Goodwin has written about film for scores of national publications.



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Once upon a time, the films of Louis Malle, Jean-Luc Godard, Werner Herzog, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Robert Bresson, Alain Tanner, Yasujiro Ozu, Ousmane Sembene, Nagisa Oshima, Andrzej Wajda, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, and many others were unknown to American audiences.

In 1964 a man named Dan Talbot saw Bernardo Bertolucci's *Before the Revolution* at the New York Film Festival. He'd never heard of Bertolucci but he knew a masterpiece when he saw one and wanted to show the film at his New Yorker Theatre. The producer refused. He wanted national distribution—not a small art house on Manhattan's Upper West Side. Talbot made a distribution deal and that is how New Yorker Films was born and how we came to know, see, and appreciate the above honor roll of filmmakers.

Now, 24 years and a thousand films later, the San Francisco International Film Festival is proud to honor Daniel Talbot with its First Annual Mel Novikoff Award for his distinguished service as importer, distributor, and exhibitor of distinguished movies from around the world. No distribution company has had a greater impact on serious moviegoers in this country than New Yorker Films. Thank you, Daniel Talbot, for your vision, your energy, your perseverance.



Tony Reveaux asked Dan Talbot about the changes that have occurred during the 24 years since the founding of New Yorker Films. Talbot's answers follow.

ART THEATERS: There are fewer art theaters today. In 1980 there were between 100 and 150 viable repertory theaters in America. Now, in 1988, there are less than 20. When you consider that we are a country of 230 million people, it's not a very striking figure.

VIDEOCASSETTES: Videocassettes are fortunate in that the legacy of classic cinema is continued, and unfortunate in the sense that there's no longer a need to go to a theater unless you want to see something glorious on a large screen. Videocassettes have increased in the classrooms, yet not in the film societies. Many schools are beginning to tool up for sophisticated, expensive video presentation systems.

Another thing that has changed appreciably is that the "window" between theatrical run and video release is much shorter now. In 16mm it used to be from 18 months to 2 years. Now, it's down to about 6 to 12 months, which makes it a more competitive marketplace.

FOREIGN FILMS: The quantity of foreign films exhibited in the U.S. has remained about the same, but I think we're in an artistic trough now. I screen a great deal of material, and I often get depressed. But I think that these kinds of things are often cyclical, and we may be on the verge of seeing something very exciting and bright. We don't know. It's all changing, but it's not the end of film culture.

Tony Reveaux is the editor of *Computer Publicity News*, a contributing editor of *Artweek*, and *Macintosh Today*, and has written for major film publications.

Can You Trust Film Reviews

By Ellin Stein

In an ideal universe, movies would receive the same kind of coverage as football. Coverage would be based on the inherent worth of what was playing, not on how many fans are likely to turn up. In-depth analysis would be encouraged. It would not be the writer's job to determine winners and losers, but to look for the kind of imagination, strength, style, and commitment that marks a class act. Pedestrian, lackluster efforts would be labeled such, no matter how much hype surrounded them or how big the stars are. Reviewers would be expected to write with color, expertise, and passion.

ARTS COVERAGE VS. CELEBRITY TIDBITS

But the arts do not hold the same grip on the national psyche as football, and arts coverage in any media is minuscule by comparison, well behind politics, finance, and sports, and about even with weather. By arts coverage, I mean pieces about the product or process, not celebrity tidbits. Infotainment items such as Madonna's current marital status are unfortunately front page news.

Movies—unlike dance, theatre, the visual arts, and all but a handful of books—have the potential to be economically viable, a phenomenon that may or may not be accompanied by intrinsic creative merit. The reviewer is caught between two criteria for success: box office draw and creative merit.

In a perfect world there would be a relationship between boffo b.o. and artistic quality. However, a quick comparison of the week's top grossers and reviewer acclaim should put any quaint notions about that to rest. The only place they meet is in the middle. Otherwise, the critically castigated soar to the top of the gross chart while the critics' darlings languish in the cellar.



Judy Stone

Occasionally films prove that aesthetic worthiness is not an insurmountable obstacle to financial success as long as the advertising budget is big enough. *Roxanne* and *Room With a View* are such examples. And sometimes, with the frequency of blue moons, a true original like *She's Gotta Have It* [SFIFF 1986] comes out of left field to make money and prove that the wacky public can still confound the marketing experts by discovering previously unhyped talent.

HOTBED OF SUPPORT

The Bay Area is a hotbed of support for films without big studio backing because, in addition to multiplex-alternatives that show unusual limited-run films, it has daily newspaper critics who will fight for the space to review such work. Fight may be too strong a word, but newspaper editors may not immediately per-

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ceive why they should devote valuable space to a limited-release film that few of their readers are going to see, not to mention films whose distributors cannot afford to buy much advertising.

"We are in a film glut, and we're stretched to the limit as it is," says *Examiner* critic Michael Sragow. "You really have to do first-run films that are going to be in a lot of theatres. If it's a question between reviewing a one-nighter and something playing for one week in 20 theatres, you'd be more likely to do the weekly unless there's something extraordinary about the one-nighter. But I'll almost always do three or four-day runs at length, and I'm more likely to do a four-day independent than a fourth generation subgenre Charles Bronson," he said, noting that the *Examiner* had given more prominent display to small films such as *Hope and Glory*, *Dreamchild*, and the program of films by the brothers Quay [SFIFF 1987] over big commercial releases. However, Sragow does not feel that small is inherently beautiful. "Lots of independent films are not necessarily better or more virtuous," he observed.

Sometimes virtue and independence go hand in hand, especially in the case of docu-



Michael Sragow

mentaries that deal with important issues like toxic pollution or U.S. policy in Central America that are not being explored in-depth elsewhere, not because of censorship so much as because downers don't sell.

"I sometimes feel a sense of responsibility to review documentary filmmakers who have limited access," says *Chronicle* critic Judy Stone. "Particularly when I know the documentary is on an important subject."

Although Stone "doesn't like being put in a bag of only reviewing obscure movies," her predilection for reviewing documentaries and foreign films has given her the reputation of being willing to explore tributaries of the mainstream. "There was a joke at the *Chronicle* that I liked Hungarian movies before I ever saw one," she said. However, the obscure bag has its compensations. As Stone points out, a critic can have more impact therein. "If I wrote a negative review of *Beverly Hills Cop II*, it would still get a huge box office," she said. "But sometimes it's possible to influence the audience for a small movie or a small theatre."

Nowhere is this more evident than with the *New York Times*' Vincent Canby. Canby's glowing review of *Chan is Missing* and *Stranger Than Paradise* were arguably the crucial factor in launching the careers of directors Wayne Wang and Jim Jarmusch. "Canby has as much clout as he does for a good reason," said a New York exhibitor (such is the *Times*' power that this person spoke only on the condition that his identity be concealed).

"It's not just his stature and prestige," the mystery exhibitor continued. "It has to do with his style of writing and his enthusiasm and passion for film. He has a capacity for appreciating subtlety and intellectually challenging work that the *Times*' second and third string critics, who aren't as committed to the medium, just don't have."

A JOURNALIST IS A JOURNALIST IS A REVIEWER

This brings up the question of what it takes to be (or get hired as) a film critic. Conventional

newspaper wisdom has it that a journalist is a journalist: If you can cover the statehouse, you can cover the Supreme Court; if you can cover Cambodia, you can cover Israel. The same principle applies to reviewing: If you can review books, you can review film. This is not to say that some reporters, thrust into the movie reviewer's chair, don't end up doing a good job.

A new trend is to find reviewers like Sragow, who have a background in film history, theory, and filmmaking. Several film-knowledgeable reviewers came up through the ranks of the alternative weeklies. The *Boston Phoenix* in particular has been fertile ground for influential New York-based publications, with the *New Yorker*'s Pauline Kael often acting as talent scout-cum-fairy-godmother. As these publications consider anything outside the BosWash Corridor slightly more exotic than Tashkent, Bay Area weekly reviewers, no matter how competent, are unlikely to be tapped for greatness. However, the *Los Angeles Times*' Sheila Benson, now one of the industry's most influential critics, started at the *Pacific Sun*, and Kael herself began at KPFA. Even worse than being from the West Coast when it comes to becoming a mainstream critic is being from an ethnic minority. Outside specifically minority-oriented publications, the ranks of critics do not reflect the ethnic diversity of the film going public.

REVIEWERS AND CRITICS

The distinction between reviewers and critics is as nebulous as the distinction between movies and film. Some people define a critic as anyone who writes a review longer than half a page. Some hard liners assert that one must use the words *dialectic*, *mechanism*, or *mise-en-scène* at least twice in any given piece to be a critic. My own definition is that a reviewer can tell you if he or she liked a film, but a critic can tell you why and distinguish between personal taste and objective merit. Another definition might be that a critic lends distinction to the particular piece but a reviewer's prestige is borrowed from the employer.

A general rule of thumb is that the smaller the audience of any given publication, the more likely it is to employ critics rather than reviewers and the more likely it is to devote column inches to films of creative rather than investment value. There are, of course, exceptions. *Time*'s Richard Corliss, as past editor of *Film Comment*, the house organ of the Film Society of Lincoln Center, is definitely a critic and may even be acquainted with more Hungarian film than Judy Stone, but with less than a full page in a mass circulation weekly, he must devote his attention to the usual suspects.

The *Village Voice* has a decent circulation but nevertheless uses writers who are blatantly film-erudite and are willing to review experimental art films that are beyond the purview of even more enlightened daily critics. Just as a rave review from Canby can mean financial viability for an independent narrative feature, a positive review from the *Voice*'s excellent J. Hoberman can be the key to career-making

Museum of Modern Art screenings and NEA grants for the art filmmaker.

Then there are critics who have a primarily literary form of reference. These often write for limited circulation journals such as *The Atlantic*, *The Nation*, or *The New Republic* and tend to discuss movies in terms of plot, character, and narrative elements, rarely mentioning editing, camera angles and other hints that we're not talking ink and paper. On the other hand, the mass circulation journals such as *People* and *USA Today* use a TV frame of reference, not so much in comparing movies to television as preferring to review films that are not much more intellectually taxing than TV and feature TV stars.

A NEW WRINKLE

Which brings us to reviewers on TV. Movie reviewers on television provide light relief to the news. They come in two models: singles and couples. Much as weatherpersons are expected to tell us if the weather is going to be good or bad without mentioning the impact of such weather on crops or the ozone layer or otherwise looking at the larger picture, the basic function of the TV reviewer is to say

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simply whether the movie is good or bad in a diverting manner and ignore cultural significance.

A new wrinkle was introduced with the buddy system TV review shows, as producers shrewdly guessed that our real interest in Siskel and Ebert lay not in if they disagreed about whether Meryl Streep's latest performance was excessively mannered but in if this time they

would finally roll up their sleeves and go to the mat to settle it. Although their rumpled sweaters and imperfect haircuts have long since been replaced by the seamless image and haughty demeanor of television personalities, Siskel and Ebert have not completely vanished into the void of Lite Reviews, possibly because they continue to write. They make an effort to cover smaller films and will put a relatively complex, discreetly promoted film like David Mamet's *House of Games* high on their Top 10 of 1987 lists. If Siskel and Ebert retain some aura of thoughtfulness and integrity, the same cannot be said of the other TV review teams who make up in obnoxiousness what they lack in perceptiveness, creating the oxymoron of aggressive vapidity.

As far as the studios are concerned, what the TV reviewers have to say is far less important than that they say anything and, above all, show the clip. As the New York mystery exhibitor says, "Some films don't need the *Times*, the *Voice*, or anything else. Reviews are not what bring audiences in; massive ad campaigns on TV do," and the TV review shows are largely adjuncts of these campaigns, a sort of Home Shoppers Network for first-run, wide-release films.

Just as television has put new pressure on newspaper reporters to write news for the non-literate, it has affected newspaper film reviewers. "I would be glad if TV reviewers went away," says Sragow. "A consumer guide mentality is rubbing off from TV. There's always the pressure to give thumbs up or thumbs down." And Stone adds, "I don't watch them, and I'm annoyed when they are quoted at parties. I dislike that simplification." It could be argued, however, that there is a vast constituency for the simplistic, and that the many people who prefer not to be burdened with the complex or challenging should have reviewers who speak to their interests.

THE SHOW BUSINESS BIBLE

Oddly enough, one TV critic who does not resort to the simple yea or nea is Leonard Maltin of *Entertainment Tonight*, possibly be-

cause in the E.T. universe movies are not a back-of-the-book frill but are serious business. Likewise, where one might think *Variety* had strictly a bottomline mentality, giving short shrift to films with low commercial potential, in fact the "Bible of Show Business" (*Variety*) is perhaps the most ecumenical and comprehensive source of film coverage. "It reviews narrative films from all over the world, documentary, some experimental—if it's longer than an hour and shown in a theatrical venue, it's reviewed," said Edith Kramer who, as director of the Pacific Film Archive, reads *Variety* to keep up with foreign titles.

"Many of *Variety*'s critics are out in the field," San Francisco International Film Festival director Peter Scarlet said, "and their reviews are more valuable because they see everything in a given country whereas in America we see only the cream of the crop."

Scarlet also observed, "*Variety* critics are more conversant with the actual process of filmmaking." *Variety* assumes it is speaking to an audience of peers and, like the *Village Voice*, its reviews don't issue warnings about film that may be too unconventional or difficult for its readers. *Variety* is more willing to judge whether a film works on its own terms rather than in relation to some assumed norm.

NO PARTY LINE

It is in this attitude toward the audience's ability to deal with the unexpected that the politics of reviewing are most clearly revealed, and inevitably the same attitude turns up in the network's or publication's presentation of hard news. Television and the more editorially conservative publications assume the public will be unduly disturbed by any views that challenge accepted norms, so they have a high tolerance for sentimental movies that glaze traditional values with an extra helping of sugar. Films that reinforce traditional prejudices are okay as long as it is done with a high professional gleam (*Fatal Attraction*, need I say more).

The more liberal publications stick up for alienated, culturally subversive films. One

need only compare reviews of *Blue Velvet* to find a congruence between tolerance of moral ambiguity in movies and a less Manichean view of the world. Poobahs of mass media journalism, conditioned to regard the audience as consumption units rather than thinking individuals, believe the folks out there will find innovative form as disturbing as thought-provoking content, and far be it from them to recommend what they would not practice.

This is not to imply that reviewers (or critics) have no gumption and only write what will comply with the party line to keep their jobs. Although the phenomenon of self-censorship is not unknown in journalism, newspapers are not administrations, and the credibility a critic has built up by holding down the job since before the flood is not likely to be sacrificed just because his or her views don't reflect those of the current editorial regime.

It never hurts to fit, however, and some publications and television shows prefer reviewers whose personal prejudices most closely approximate those of the perceived audience. A critic who reviews *Raw*, for example, and fails to mention, let alone deplore, the film's smug gay bashing may not be out of sync with the many viewers or readers who are not offended by these attitudes.

The question is whether the reviewer should dare to be less parochial than someone who does not make a profession out of evaluating popular culture. Fortunately, we can vote with our pocketbooks. As increasing numbers support films that are made out of a filmmaker's creative vision rather than a marketing team's demographic projections, coverage of these films will increase along with a realization that the public is not as afraid of originality as previously thought. Eventually we will get more reviewers who come up to our level. ■

Ellin Stein has reviewed theatre for the *San Francisco Chronicle* and has written on film for publications including the *New York Times*, *Village Voice*, *American Film*, and *Canyon Cinemanews*. Stein's book on satire in the seventies will be published by Harper & Row.

Congratulations 1988 San Francisco International Film Festival

Edward and Laleh Zelinsky



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THIRD
Akira Kurosawa Award
FOR LIFE ACHIEVEMENT

Robert Bresson

Akira Kurosawa received the Festival's first Lifetime Achievement Award in 1986, and the award is now named in his honor. Last year's recipient was Michael Powell. In 1988, the Festival is proud to honor Robert Bresson.

FILMOGRAPHY

Les Affaires Publiques (1934) Les Anges du péché (1943), Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne (1945), Diary of a Country Priest (1950), A Man Escaped (1956), Pickpocket (1959), Trial of Joan of Arc (1961), Au Hasard, Balthazar (1966), Mouchette (1967), A Gentle Creature (1969), Four Nights of a Dreamer (1971), Lancelot du Lac (1974), The Devil, Probably (1977), L'Argent (1982).

Bresson is the author of NOTES ON THE CINEMATOGRAPHER, published by Quartet Encounters.

BRESSON SPEAKS

The American cinema is the finest in the world. I'm very happy to be receiving this prize, for I've had a lot of difficulty in getting my work known abroad.

What interests me is style—the way in which the film is made. It seems to me that I finally succeeded in really getting it right with L'ARGENT. Style—in other words, silence, and the tricks which allow the imagination to work, just as in painting.

What I'm seeking to do in a film is to strip away—and to find the proper rhythm. What interests me is to do something other than tell a story. It's all in the relationship between the eye and the ear. Listening/seeing/listening/seeing—and combining them, in order to have harmony: that's very different from telling a story. The important thing is that it be well-written, it's a question of rhythm.

ON ACTORS

I don't cast actors, there's no "acting" in my films. Acting is what I call "photographed theatre." Critics don't understand that my "actors" aren't acting, so they say "they don't act well"! Cinema is a specific art, not the translation of something by photographing it. What's the interest in directing actors? You might as well be doing theatre.

PAINTING AND MOVEMENT

What's been important for me since my childhood has been to paint—in other words, to see. You only understand things while sketching them.

And then I stopped painting. I said to myself: you've got to do something that moves. I want to see the leaves on the trees moving. So I started to work in cinema.

LES AFFAIRES PUBLIQUES (1934)

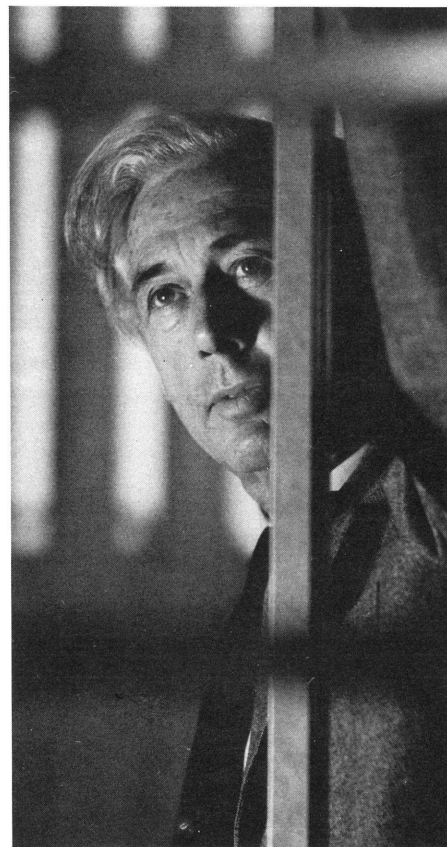
My first film, which disappeared until recently is the opposite of everything I did later. At the time, I was deeply into surrealism, and it was an English surrealist who gave me the money to make it.

I was a painter at the time, and I wanted to make a film—a slightly crazy film. It didn't have any success when it came out. It had silly songs with completely idiotic lyrics. The producer later cut them all out.

I'm not sorry I made it, but at the time I did it without knowing anything about how to make a film. But I wasn't mistaken, I did right away what I was going to do afterward: work by instinct. There's no reason not to show it, since I made it. But after that I never wanted to make another comic film. What I wanted to do afterward was to not tell a story.

INTUITION

But my manner of working has stayed the same—nothing's calculated in advance. Art



doesn't exist without surprises. I don't want to be thinking in the evening about what I'll be doing the next day. It all works instinctively, by intuition. In order to reflect, you mustn't think. You mustn't ever think. The important thing is to be an artist, to invent things in your head. Learning is very bad, schools are very bad. Learn what? You have to be ignorant.

ON FILMGOING, AUDIENCES, AND THE FUTURE

To put it simply, I used to go to see many films. Today, in France, there's not much that's good. I haven't gone to films for 25 or 30 years. You need geniuses, and there aren't any.

When I was hissed for L'ARGENT at Cannes, I was very happy. I'd gotten what I deserved. I'd have been terrified to have been applauded by the people at Cannes!

I don't have much time left before me, but I'm sure there are other things to be found, in order to always do something new in film. It's so extraordinary to make films, so much fun.

From an interview with Robert Bresson by Peter Scarlet and Nadine Vasseur at Bresson's Paris apartment December 17, 1987. Translation by Peter Scarlet.

“Bresson is the French cinema as Dostoevsky is the Russian novel and Mozart is music.”

—Jean-Luc Godard

FAR EASTERN CINEMA



In the United States, when we think of Far Eastern cinema we tend to think only of Japan. In fact, China, Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and the Philippines are coming into their own as vital centers of filmmaking.

By Tony Rayns

Mainland Chinese cinema has been a battle zone since this time last year. Most of the shots aren't fired in public, although the issues first flared up in the pages of Shanghai newspapers. Ironically, the repercussions will probably be felt more strongly by overseas viewers of Chinese films. As the controversy gained momentum, two men (both, as it happens, named Wu) emerged as the key antagonists. Both of them head film studios, and both are film directors in their own right.

Wu Yigong is the head of Shanghai Film Studio, the oldest and largest center of film production in China. As a director, he's best known for his 1982 film *My Memories of Old*

Beijing [SFIFF 1984]; he has since directed *Elder Sister* (1984) and *University in Exile* (1985). As studio head, he's the custodian of a filmmaking tradition that goes back to the 1920s, long before the founding of the People's Republic of China, and he faces the invidious task of deciding who among dozens of rival claimants (including many middle-aged and elderly directors who have worked in the studio all their lives) will get a share of each year's ration of cash and production facilities.

BALANCING THE STUDIO'S BOOKS

Wu Tianming is the head of Xi'an Film Studio, a medium-sized production center founded in 1956. His last three films as director

have all been notable: *River Without Boys* (1983), *Life* (1984) and *Old Well* (1987) [SFIFF 1988]. He was elected studio head in 1984, and he has transformed a moribund enterprise with an undistinguished record into the liveliest, most innovative studio in China. The absence of a large pool of staff directors has left him free to invite directors of his choice to work in Xi'an. His policy (so far successful) is to balance the studio's books by producing both commercial entertainments (*The Magic Braid* and *The Legend of the Dowager Empress's Tomb*) and prestige films like *In the Wild Mountains* [SFIFF 1987], *The Black Cannon Incident* [SFIFF 1987] and *Horse Thief* [SFIFF 1988].

His readiness to take on unconventional projects has made the studio a magnet for the young "fifth generation" directors, but several old directors of the "fourth generation" have also done their best work for Xi'an; they include Teng Wenji, Yan Xueshu, and Wu Tianming himself.

RAGING CONTROVERSY

The controversy that raged through Chinese film circles in 1987 was sparked in the summer of 1986 by an attack on the films of Xie Jin written by a young critic named Zhu Dake and printed in the Shanghai newspaper *Wenhui Bao*. Xie Jin is the quintessential Shanghai director. His work virtually embodies the studio's spirit. Xie Jin's films included *Two Stage Sisters*, *The Legend of Tianyun Mountain* and most recently *Hibiscus Town*, all of which are emotive melodramas with high-gear performances, glossy production values, and sumptuous *mise-en-scène*. Zhu denounced Xie's films as "cinematic Confucianism" and called their ideology as dated and debased as their aesthetic sensibility.

SERVING THE PEOPLE

Zhu Dake didn't say what he wanted to see in place of this "manipulative, tear-jerking art," but the timing and placement of his attack strongly implied an endorsement of the "new wave" represented by films such as Chen Kaige's *Yellow Earth* [SFIFF 1986] and Tian Zhuang Zhuang's *On the Hunting Ground*. Most of those who rallied to Xie Jin's defense certainly took it that way. They included Wu Yigong (as studio head, effectively the producer of Xie Jin's last two films), who entered



Love Unto Waste

the fray with a speech in March 1987 that was subsequently printed in the national daily *Guangming Ribao*. Wu's speech was carefully oblique: it neither directly defended Xie Jin against the charges nor directly attacked the "fifth generation." But the basic thrust was clear. Wu criticized those in China who content themselves with art-house success in overseas markets and argued instead for a new type of sophisticated entertainment cinema, which would be capable of reaching large audiences both at home and abroad. (By an interesting coincidence, Wu made his speech right after Steven Spielberg's visit to Shanghai to shoot exteriors for *Empire of the Sun*.) Wu's fundamental argument was that innovative, unconventional films that please "salon audiences" abroad but fail to please the mass public in China are guilty of not "serving the people," an ominous echo of the rhetoric associated with the later years of the Cultural Revolution.

BOURGEOIS LIBERALISM

Printing Wu's speech helped launch the revived campaign against "bourgeois liberalism" spearheaded by hard-left ideologues such as Deng Liqun and Hu Qiaomu. It won loud support from the Film Bureau, the office that oversees all aspects of the film industry and film culture in China, and it caused a large shiver through the industry itself, even among some who had not greeted the "new wave" films with particular enthusiasm. The effects have largely remained hidden: a canceled project here, an extended struggle against censorship there. Ironically, the victims included Xie Jin, whose *Hibiscus Town* was given strictly limited release in China and has only recently been passed for export in a drastically modified version. But supporters of the "New Chinese Cinema" agree that 1987 was a difficult year for young directors in particular, and friends in China tell me that there's no real sign of an improvement in 1988.

MASS AUDIENCE FANTASIES

Wu Tianming has made no direct response to Wu Yigong's speech other than to release his own *Old Well* and to produce films like Chen Kaige's *King of Children* and Zhang Yimou's *Red Sorghum*. He will not necessarily expect these films to turn a profit for the studio (and he has covered his back by producing comedies, war films, and martial arts films), but he will expect them to form the vanguard of Chinese cinema for the coming year and to be considered artistically important films. He's undoubtedly right to do so. *Old Well* won four prizes at the 1987 Tokyo Film Festival, including Best Picture, and *King of Children* has already been sold for distribution in at least five other countries. Another organization that has refrained from commenting on the controversy is China Film Corporation, which handles distribution of Chinese films both at home and abroad. The corporation is experienced enough to know that Wu Yigong's hopes for Chinese cinema reaching mass audiences in the West are hopeless fantasies. It also knows that the "new



Horse Thief

Tosca

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wave" films have sold more widely (and in more lucrative markets) than previous Chinese films.

Wu Yigong has meanwhile put his money where his mouth is by making *The Tribulations of a Chinese Gentleman*, a period adventure comedy based on a Jules Verne novel and co-produced with a West German company. Wu himself is credited as "supervisory director"; the executive director was Zhang Jianya, one of the three "fifth generation" graduates from the Film Academy assigned to work in Shanghai. The film is handsomely designed and has sequences of sustained invention, but as a whole it suffers from the ponderousness found in so much mainstream Chinese cinema. Each scene has one set tone and makes one clear point. I doubt that it will earn much hard currency from foreign sales.



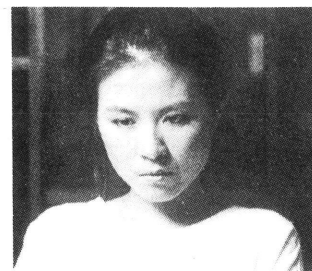
The Big Parade

Peter Scarlet, Artistic Director SFIFF, and his colleagues have made their views on this controversy implicit in their programming. They have not invited *The Tribulations of a Chinese Gentleman*, but they are screening *Old Well*, alongside films from the "fifth generation." This seems to me the right tactic under the circumstances. What's needed now from us in the West is a recognition that Wu Tianming and his young allies are giving us authentically Chinese films that we can value for their Chi-nese-ness and for their qualities as cinema. *Yellow Earth* was only the first in a growing body of films that are free of Soviet and Hollywood influences, that are emphatically not



Surrogate Mother

filmed theatre, and that embrace subtlety and ambiguity rather than the current doctrinaire political line. They may not *please* the majority of the Chinese audience, but they may in a global sense, *serve* them.



The Terrorizer

ART VERSUS ENTERTAINMENT

Each of the other countries of the Orient plays out the same "art versus entertainment" debate in its own way. In Taiwan (which is more similar to the People's Republic in more ways than either side would care to admit), the year started off with the publication of a manifesto demanding greater support for "New Cinema" from the government and the government-controlled media. It was signed by a solid core of filmmakers, artists, and critics, and was counter-signed by a large group of supporters in Hong Kong. Their complaints included the inadequate distribution of "New Cinema" films, the paucity of intelligent criticism in the press, and the timid and conservative production policies of the Central Motion Picture Corporation (which happens to be owned and funded by the ruling Kuomintang).

A CULTURAL PUTSCH

It must have seemed that the time was right for a cultural putsch. The overall level of film production in Taiwan had fallen drastically and the market was swamped with ultra-commercial imports from Hong Kong. At the same time, Edward Yang had just won his first Golden Horse Award (Taiwan's Oscar) for *The Terrorizer* [SFIFF 1988] and the film had done much better in distribution than anyone had foreseen. However, the initiative met the usual brick-wall response from the authorities, and the movement quickly lost its momentum. Yang is now planning to make his next film in Hong Kong, while Taiwan's other major director, Hou Hsiao-hsien, is forming a private company with like-minded friends and is looking for co-production finance from abroad. The most hopeful sign in recent months has been the unexpected commercial success of Hou Hsiao-hsien's *Dust in the Wind*. But Taiwan urgently needs a Wu Tianming of its own.

LOUD PROSPERITY IN HONG KONG

The chief problem facing ambitious filmmakers in Hong Kong is the loud prosperity of the industry they work in. In a market where films such as Jackie Chan's action comedies, John Wu's gangster thrillers, and Tsui Hark's tumultuous fantasies gross extraordinary sums at the box-office, there is little space for alternative approaches, especially when they are modest in scale. The career of Stanley Kwan is instructive in this respect. Formerly an assistant to leading new wave directors Ann Hui, Patrick Tam, and Yim Ho, he had a surprise hit with his first feature as the director of *Women*.

This success encouraged independent producer Vicky Lee-Leung to take a chance on his next project, *Love Unto Waste* [SFIFF 1988], a more personal film with a degree of emotional complexity almost unknown in Hong Kong cinema. The film did disappointing business, forcing Kwan to look for something with greater career security. He signed a six-picture contract to direct for Jackie Chan's company—and now, after making one trouble-fraught movie and helping out on several others—he is already trying to get out of it. Other talented young directors—Shu Kei, Eddie Fong, Clara Law and Kirk Wong—have had similar difficulties. Meanwhile, the grand-daddy of alternative cinema in Hong Kong, Allen Fong, has auto-destructed his film career and moved back to television.

RAISING STANDARDS IN SOUTH KOREA

South Korea, where the film industry has recently benefitted from a degree of government deregulation, is not yet prosperous or stable enough to have developed alternatives to



The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On

mainstream cinema. It falls to the upper echelon industry directors, led by Im Kwon-Taek and Lee Doo-Yong, to raise standards as best they can. Considering how prolific they have to be to earn a living, they came up with some remarkably accomplished work. Im's *Surrogate Woman* [SFIFF 1988], for example, invests an over-familiar story and period setting with an intensity and vehemence that lift the film above the norms of its genre.

FINANCIAL UNCERTAINTY IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines film industry is still plagued by financial uncertainties, and the Filipino audience is in no mood for anything but blatantly escapist entertainment. Lino Brocka has two ambitious projects in hand, but he still has to pay the rent by churning out regulation melodramas [Christian Blackwood's documentary portrait, *Signed: Lino Brocka*, will be screened during the 1988 San Francisco International Film Festival]. Of the other 'veterans', Ishmael Bernal is seriously ill and Mike De Leon has turned away from film. The only real sign of life is the explosion in young independent cinema. Much of it very talented. The foremost figure is 23 year old Raymond Red, whose short films [*The Yawn*, *Kind*, *Enemy*, *Seeming*, and *Sketches*, SFIFF 1988] are unique in world cinema. Within modest but precise images such as a rented room in the 1950s, a derelict mountain shack, or a bunk bed in a bare room, he reveals labyrinths that Borges could have dreamed.

VARIETY IN JAPAN

Of all Eastern Countries, Japan is the one with a spectrum of filmmaking closest to the western pattern. In 1987, as usual, the majors produced little or nothing of note—the pace was set by the independents. Juzo Itami's third



Robinson's Garden

feature *A Taxing Woman* (following *The Funeral* [SFIFF 1985] and *Tampopo* [SFIFF 1987]) confirmed his so far unerring knack for finding fresh subjects with mass appeal. His run of skillfully engineered hits has already given his small company the status of a "mini-major" in a beleaguered industry. Lower down the financial scale, the younger independents continue to break new ground, as much in the political arena (Hara's *The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On* [SFIFF 1988]) as in the post-political counter culture (Yamamoto's *Robinson's Garden* [SFIFF 1988]).

Eastern directors seem to be surmounting all the difficulties and delivering films more vital than most made in the West these days. As the crisis in the Philippines film industry since the overthrow of Marcos suggests, the difficulties may well play an important part in provoking films of such conspicuous energy and commitment. This is not to praise the chains but an element of opposition never goes amiss in a work of art.



Old Well

NOTE: The following films will be shown during the 1988 San Francisco International Film Festival: *Old Well*, *Horse Thief*, *The Terrorizer*, *Love Unto Waste*, *Surrogate Woman*, *The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On*, *Robinson's Garden*, *Signed: Lino Brocka*, *The Yawn*, *Kind*, *Enemy*, *Seeming*, and *Sketches*.

Tony Rayns is a filmmaker and critic based in London. He has recently directed a documentary on New Chinese Cinema for British TV and written a feature script for Wayne Wang.



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in resonant,
old waterfront
surroundings..."

—P.Unterman
S.F. Chronicle



C A F E

The Bay Area: Hollywood's New Back Lot?

By Mia Amato

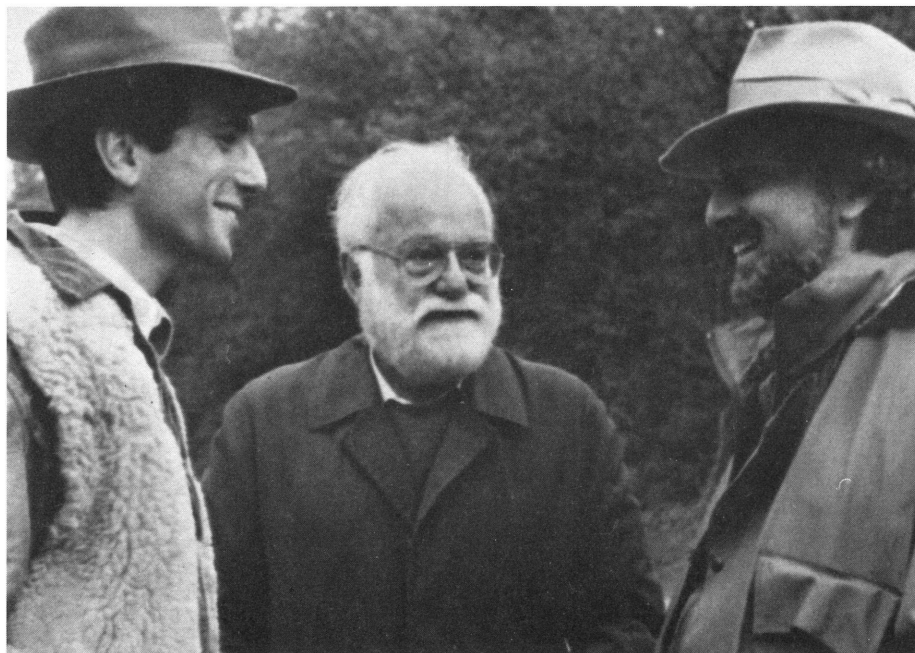
Two bare-breasted young women riding horseback on the beach didn't phase the regulars at Stinson beach. So reports local cinematographer Hiro Narita, the director of photography for three key scenes in the Saul Zaentz feature, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. Can it be that the sight of a film crew is so common in the Bay Area? Certainly Bay Area suburbs and exurbs support a lively film community, and the feature based on the Milan Kundera novel, directed by Phil Kaufman and produced by Saul Zaentz, was a local effort. Although the film was primarily shot in France and Switzerland, three scenes added to fill out the story line were shot in Bolinas and Stinson Beach, a short drive from Zaentz's film company headquarters in Berkeley.

Narita's recollection of the Stinson shoot suggest why filmmakers are using the Bay Area as a back lot.

"No one seemed to pay any attention," he recalls. "We were shooting in natural light, without a lot of equipment. We'd brought along



Natasha Richardson in *Patty Hearst*



Daniel Day-Lewis, Saul Zaentz and Philip Kaufman

a lot of extras, dressed up like hippies of the sixties, and we had them throwing frisbees. I guess we just blended in."

Working with Kaufman, Narita also filmed in the Bolinas home of editor Walter Murch which stood in for the art studio of the female protagonist. This additional scene required that the actress be flown in from Sweden.

"The hardest thing to get was a shot of two cranes flying over Bolinas," says Narita. "It took me eight days." The scene is symbolic of two "spirits" representing two people who die in the course of the narrative, he explains, adding that Kaufman specifically wanted the birds flying across a sunset. With a small crew, Narita went out every day for three days before finally locating a nest of blue herons. "The next days we were fogged in, but eventually I was able to discover their feeding schedule, finding out exactly where they went at that particular time and when they returned to the nest," he says.

San Francisco seems to have more of its share of film production these days. The City gained an estimated \$95 million in revenues from the industry in 1987. In the annals of recent movie fiction, Golden Gate Park and North Beach have been a backdrop for *Star Trek: Part IV*; Tosca's in North Beach and a

Tenderloin alley are key scenes for *Heat* and *Sunlight*, Rob Nilsson's latest experimental black-and-white film shot on videotape and blown up to 35mm for theatrical release. Mayor Art Agnos' Potrero Hill neighborhood is a particular favorite that has provided a number of exterior locations for national commercials as well as *Burglar*, a Whoopi Goldberg vehicle, and the Bill Cosby feature *Leonard, Part VI*.

At this writing, work continues on *Willow* at George Lucas' Skywalker Ranch in Marin County. Amidst Napa's wine region, Francis Ford Coppola has a team working on a new film that has the working title *Tucker*. The Saul Zaentz Film Center, a six-story building that blends in with one of Berkeley's heavy-industry neighborhoods, is a mecca for filmmakers drawn to work at the sophisticated editing and sound-mixing facilities designed for *Amadeus* and other Oscar winners.

Paradoxically, another recently produced film whose topic may seem quintessentially San Francisco was lensed elsewhere. *Patty Hearst* director Paul Schrader (best known for his screenplays for *Taxi Driver* and *Raging Bull*) and crew spent only five days on location in the City, where the kidnapped heiress, a cousin of *San Francisco Examiner* publisher William Randolph Hearst III, endured nearly two months as captive of a terrorist group to emerge as Tanya, a gang member and bank robber.

"It's not much of a location story," says the film's publicist, Saul Kahan. "After all, she spent the first 51 days of her abduction in a



Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home

closet." Kahan points out that the film is not a documentary: "It's very expressionistic and stylistic...a psychological portrait, a film about what a person does to survive." Locations in the City that do appear in the film include the Bank of America at 38th Avenue and Balboa, Sproul Plaza, and an apartment Kahan says was "very near" the actual one where Hearst was kept prisoner.

By the time you read this, Clint Eastwood may even be shooting the latest *Dirty Harry*

flick on the streets of San Francisco. If Hollywood has indeed discovered the City, it's going to be harder than ever to park your car as creative hordes armed with permits bring a little glamor and a lot of money to our town.

Mia Amato is former senior editor of *Millimeter* and a bi-coastal freelance writer.

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Golden Gate Awards

The 1988 Golden Gate Awards Competition, coordinated by Brian Gordon, attracted over 575 entries from 16 countries. In January juries assembled from all over the Bay Area to view hundreds of hours of film and tape. The results of their deliberation follow.

From the antics of British transvestite comedy-talk show host Dame Edna to an intimate look at life in a Chinese village, from a not-quite-serious study of Australia's menacing cane toads to the meditative accomplishments of experimental works, the San Francisco International Film Festival's 1988 Golden Gate Awards Competition continues its tradition of recognizing the finest achievements in non-

theatrical film, video and television production. With hundreds of entries from all over the world, the Golden Gate Awards is not only the largest but the most prestigious competition of its kind in the Western United States. Currently the Golden Gate Awards comprise four separate divisions: Film and Video, Broadcast Television, Bay Area Filmmakers, and Experiments in Form.

I. Film and Video Division

1. Short Narrative

Best of Category: **The Return of the Unfortunate Son** (*L'Retour de l'Enfant Pauvre*). Martin Pierlot/Sofis-Films, Paris, France.

Special Jury Award: **Feathers**. John Ruane, Tim White/Feathers Productions, Melbourne, Australia.

Honorable Mention: **Damsels Be Damned**. Wendy Thompson/Kelberg Holdings, Sydney, Australia.

2. Films on Film

Best of Category: **New York Framed**. Keith Griffiths, John Ellis/Large Door Ltd., London, England.

Special Jury Award: **Signed: Lino Brocka**. Christian Blackwood/Christian Blackwood Productions, New York, NY.

Honorable Mention: **Doodlin'; Impressions of Len Lye**. Keith Griffiths/Koninck International with Energy Source International for Channel 4, London, England.

3. Fine, Visual and Performing Arts

Best of Category: **Hearts and Hands**. Pat Ferrero/Ferrero Films, San Francisco, CA.

Special Jury Award: **Painted Landscapes of the Times: A Film About Sue Coe**. Helene Kladowsky/Les Productions du Regard/First Run Features, New York, NY.

Honorable Mention: **Artist on Fire: The Work of Joyce Wieland**. Kay Armatage/Dominion Pictures, Toronto, Canada.

Honorable Mention: **Jazz in the Magic City**. Sandy Jaffe, Watertown, MA.

4. Animation

Best of Category: **Paradisica**. Marcy Page/Jerome Page, San Francisco, CA.

Special Jury Award: **Palisade**. Laurie McInnes/Black Bay Films P/L, Sydney, Australia.

Honorable Mention: **Air Pirates of the Outback**. David Johnson, Steve Newman, Sydney, Australia.

Honorable Mention: **One of Those Days**. Bill Plympton, New York, NY.

5. Computer-Generated Imagery

Best of Category: **Red's Dream**. John Lasseter/Pixar, San Rafael, CA.

Special Jury Award: **Opera Industriel**. Adam Chin, Richard Cohen/Pacific Data Images, Sunnyvale, CA.

Honorable Mention: **Dance of the Stumblers**. Steve Segal, West Hollywood, CA.



Cane Toads

6. Profiles

Best of Category: **Call Me Madame (Appelez-Moi Madame)**. Francoise Romand, Paris, France.

Special Jury Award: **Creator**. Olivier Koning, Enno Rijpma/Ennovision International, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Honorable Mention: **Cissy Houston - Sweet Inspiration**. Dave Davidson/Hudson West Productions, Inc., New York, NY.

Honorable Mention: **Manatic**. Frank Marlowe, Kevin Robinson/Socio Behavioral Research Group/MRRC, Los Angeles, CA.

7. Historical and Political Issues

Best of Category: **Radio Bikini**. Robert Stone/Crossroads Film Project, Ltd., New York, NY.

Special Jury Award: **Rights and Reactions**. Phil Zwickler, Jane Lippman in association with Tapestry Productions, Ltd., New York, NY.

Honorable Mention: **Girls Apart**. Christopher Sheppard, Claude Sauvageot/New Internationalist, Oxford, England.

Honorable Mention: **The Ten-Year Lunch - the Wit and Legend of the Algonquin Roundtable**. Aviva Slesin/Aviva Slesin Films, New York, NY.

8. Sociology

Best of Category: **First Moon: Celebration of the Chinese Year**. Carma Hinton, Richard Gordon/Long Bow Group, Inc., New York, NY.

Special Jury Award: **We Are Family**. Aimee Sands, Dasal Banks, Boston, MA.

Honorable Mention: **Whisper, the Waves, the Wind**. Suzanne Lacy, Steven Hirsh, Fu-Ding Cheng, Oakland, CA.

II. Broadcast Television Division

1. Television Feature

Best of Category: **Lemon Sky**. Jan Egelson, Mark Viscidi/American Playhouse, New York, NY.

2. Entertainment-Comedy

Best of Category: **The Dame Edna Experience**. Ian Hamilton, Andy Smith/London Weekend Television, London, England.

Special Jury Award: **The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd, "Here's Why Cosmetics Should Come in Unbreakable Bottles"**. Bernie Brillstein, Jaye Tarses/NBC, New York, NY.

Honorable Mention: **The Giftie**. David Askey, Humphrey Barclay, Gordon Tucker/Television South, Kent, England.

3. Entertainment-Drama

Best of Category: **The Venus de Milo Instead**. Danny Boyle, Arwell Ellis Owen/BBC Northern Ireland, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Special Jury Award: **Catherine (Brief Lives)**. Michael White/Thames Television, London, England.

Honorable Mention: **Anne of Green Gables - The Sequel**. Kevin Sullivan/Sullivan Films, Inc. Toronto, Canada.

Honorable Mention: **Conspiracy: The Trial of the Chicago 8**. Jeremy Kagan/Inter Planetary Productions/Zenith Television/Home Box Office Inc., New York, NY.



Wrong Place, Wrong Time

4. Entertainment-Musical Variety & Fine Arts

Best of Category: **A Claymation Christmas Celebration**. Will Vinton/Will Vinton Productions, Portland, OR.

Special Jury Award: **Corridos! Tales of Passion and Revolution**. Janis Blackschleger, Luis Valdez/KQED in association with El Teatro Campesino, San Francisco, CA.

Honorable Mention: **Art Blakey: The Jazz Messenger**. Dick Fontaine, Pat Hartley/A Central Independent Television Production for Channel 4, Nottingham, England.

5. Documentary-Arts and Humanities

Best of Category: **Langston Hughes: The Dream Keeper**. St. Clair Bourne/New York Center for Visual History, New York, NY.

Special Jury Award: **Journey to Prague (Man Alive)**. David Cherniack/Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Toronto, Canada.

Honorable Mention: **Scaling the Wall**. Dan Balestrero/Kirwin Productions for the San Francisco Opera Center, San Francisco, CA.
Honorable Mention: **The Fragile Art**. Lorenzo Townsend, Lucy Mohl/KING Television News, Seattle, WA.

First Moon: Celebration of the Chinese Year





The Dame Edna Experience

Langston Hughes: The Dream Keeper



6. Documentary-Sociology

Best of Category: ***Cane Toads: An Unnatural History***. Mark Lewis/Film Australia, Sydney, Australia.

Special Jury Award: ***The Leftover Children***. John Willis/Yorkshire Television, Leeds, England.

Honorable Mention: ***Hong Kong Connection: A Degree of Uncertainty***. Benny Cheung/Radio-Television Hong Kong, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

Honorable Mention: ***The Mormons: Missionaries to the World***. Bobbie Birleffi/Sagebrush Productions in association with KCTS, Seattle, WA.

7. Documentary-History and Political Movements

Best of Category: ***Faces of the Enemy***. Bill Jersey, Jeffrey Friedman/Quest Productions, Berkeley, CA.

Special Jury Award: ***Frontline Southern Africa Destructive Engagement***. Toni Strasburg/Scope Films Ltd. in association with Central Independent Television, Nottingham, England.

Honorable Mention: ***THE HUMAN FACTOR - If You Can't Do Anything Else - Scream***. Allen Jewhurst, Gordon Tucker/Television South, Kent, England.

Honorable Mention: ***Witch Hunt***. Barbara A. Chobocky, Sydney, Australia.

III. Bay Area Filmmakers Division

1. Documentary

Best of Category: ***Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam***. Bill Couturie, Thomas Bird/Home Box Office Inc., New York, NY.

Best of Category: ***Downwind/Downstream: Threats to the Mountains and Waters of the American West***. Christopher McLeod, Robert Lewis/Earth Image Films, San Francisco, CA.

Honorable Mention: ***And Then Came John: The Story of John McGough***. Scott Andrews/Telesis Productions, Albion, CA.

Honorable Mention: ***The Color of Honor***. Loni Ding/Vox Productions, San Francisco, CA.

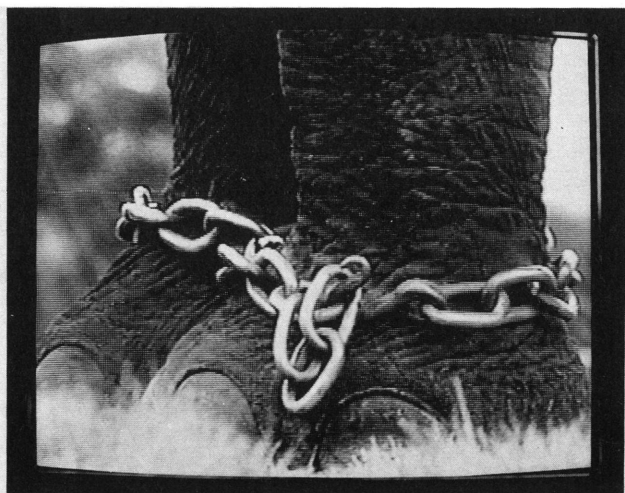
Honorable Mention: ***Where the Heart Roams***. George Paul Csicsery, Oakland, CA.

2. Short Subject

Best of Category: ***Wrong Place, Wrong Time***. John Haptas and Kristine Samuelson, Palo Alto, CA.

Special Jury Award: ***Liru***. Joslyn Grieve, Henry Chow/Liru Productions, San Francisco, CA.

Honorable Mention: ***Contact***. Starr Sutherland, San Francisco, CA.



Ganapati/A Spirit in the Bush

IV. Experiments in Form Division

1. Film

Honorarium Recipient: ***Alaya***. Nathaniel Dorsky, San Francisco, CA.

Honorarium Recipient: ***Present Tense***. Jack Walsh, New York, NY.

Honorable Mention: ***The Book of Laughs***. Roberta Cantow/Buffalo Rose Productions, New York, NY.

Honorable Mention: ***The Influence of Strangers***. Mark Daniels/Genealogy, New York, NY.

Honorable Mention: ***Nine Years Behind the Wheel***. Edward Jones, San Francisco, CA.

2. Video

Honorarium Recipient: ***Flaubert Dreams of Travel But the Illness of His Mother Prevents It***. Ken Kobland/The Wooster Group, New York, NY.

Honorarium Recipient: ***Ganapati/A Spirit in the Bush***. Daniel Reeves/CAT Fund, New York, NY/Outer Hebrides, Scotland.

Special Jury Award: ***are and/or do we LIKE MEN***. Pier E. Marton, Wendy Ultan, Glenn Biegon/UC Video/Intermedia Arts, La Jolla, CA.

Honorable Mention: ***Binge***. Lynn Herschman, San Francisco, CA.

Honorable Mention: ***Clinic***. Dale Hoyt, San Francisco, CA.

This year's competition has been funded, in part, by the generous contributions of Peter Owens and George Gund.

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A Tribute to James Broughton

On His 75th Birthday

By Janis Crystal Lipzin

The San Francisco International Film Festival pays special tribute to James Broughton, a San Francisco poet, an author of many books and plays, and a renowned pioneer in avant-garde cinema. In a remarkable career spanning five decades, the California-born artist has enriched the Bay Area and beyond with his original recipe for filmmaking as a form of poetic statement. In 1975 he was cited as "the grand classic master of independent cinema" by *Film Culture*.

In the late 1940s, Broughton exhibited at the San Francisco Museum of Art as an original member of the historic Art in Cinema Group. Broughton's collaboration with Sidney Peterson in 1946, *The Potted Psalm*, gave birth to the post-war experimental film movement in the United States. His comic fantasy *The Pleasure Garden* (1953), produced under British Film Institute sponsorship, brought him a special jury prize at the 1954 Cannes Film Festival.

Twice Broughton has been awarded Guggenheim Fellowships, and he has also received two Individual Artist Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts. Countless younger film artists in the Bay Area count him as their source of creative inspiration. For many years Broughton taught at San Francisco State College and the San Francisco Art Institute, which awarded him a Doctor of Fine Arts in 1984.

Many of his distinguished films have won prizes at film festivals around the world and received many accolades from critics and appreciators of his celebrated gifts.

The following testimonials, many contributed especially for this occasion, express the esteem and affection of his audience and colleagues:

ALAN WATTS, philosopher: "In the contemplation of lofty themes most people are serious, though not always sincere. Broughton, however, is always sincere but hardly ever serious. Indeed, seriousness is a questionable virtue. It is gravity rather than levity, and it was...that devout Catholic, C.K. Chesterton, who maintained that the angels fly because they take themselves lightly. In company with the angels, Broughton laughs with God rather than at him. Broughton is the uncrowned poet laureate of San Francisco."

KENNETH REXROTH, poet: "There is an old science fiction story about a couple who tumble through a hole in the Fourth Dimension and fall into the terrifying world in which nursery rhymes are a reverberating memory; they scarcely escape with their lives. This is the realm of Broughton's poems. There he is a master of the whimsical tone, the unexpected insight, and the hidden bite. He lives in a very special world and is an expert at pulling his audience into it, whether by his poetry or his cinema. Perhaps he lives in the same world as everybody else but sees it from a special Fourth Dimensional vista and can happily lend you his binoculars."

PETER KUBELKA, filmmaker: "You have here one of the great filmmakers of all time."

BASIL WRIGHT, filmmaker: "Broughton belongs in the pantheon that contains Vigo, Dovzhenko, Kirsanov, Brakhage, and Bunuel."

ALEX GILDZEN, poet and Curator of James Broughton Archives, Kent State University: "James is a favorite uncle who teaches the gravity of play and the silliness of the solemn. This nephew-in-waiting wishes him a jig and a juba on his birthday."

LARRY KARDISH, Film Curator, Museum of Modern Art (New York): "James Broughton is almost as young as cinema itself, and while the pleasurable body of his work may be enjoyed in many ways, it may also be experienced satisfyingly as a bright and lyric history of this century's most rapturous art."

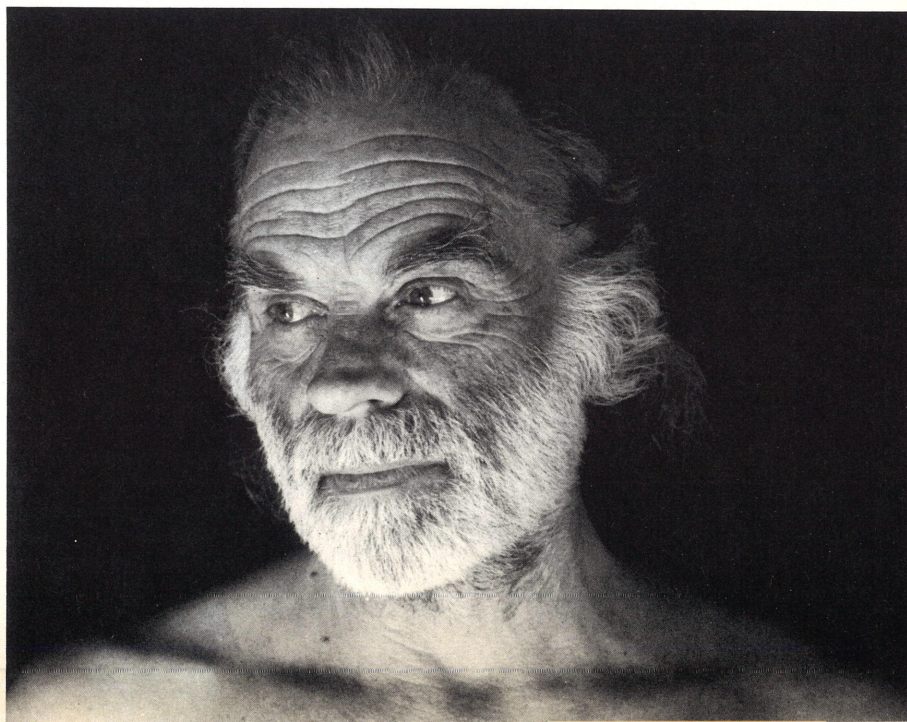
CARMEN VIGIL, poet, filmmaker, past Programmer for Canyon Cinematheque: "James Broughton is the poet of light. He is also a philosopher and a politician who believes in ecstasies for everyone. He is an educator who leads us out of the darkness of our petty selves into the divine light of our bodies. In his presence one learns the ways of the courageous: to surrender to the will of the muses, to follow completely one's own ecstatic nature in the spirit of unhindered Eros, delighting in the eternal moment. James Broughton has given us much and with love."

SIDNEY PETERSON, author, filmmaker: "Dear James: Congratulations. The world would have been a lesser place without you. Don't stop now. The rest is yet to come. We love you."

SALLY DIXON, Bush Foundation, St. Paul, Minnesota; past Film Curator, Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh: "James—there is only one! Saint James the More, of course—more of all good things, more films, more poems, more wisdom, silliness, light, more ecstasies squeezed out of simple joy. A visionary for our time, a loving man, we are truly blessed to have him among us."

EDITH KRAMER, Director, Pacific Film Archive: "Dear James, Thanks for the wit, intelligence, and joy of life shared with all of us through your films, writing, and person."

JACK FOLEY, poet, *Hooplus* reviewer: "What Broughton said, justly, of the poet Paul Mariah may be said even more justly of himself: 'He radiates his years with sweet readiness; He lights up whatever needs to be enlightened; He dispatches rainbows over the poetic desert.'"





A Spring for the Thirsty



“NEW” SOVIET CINEMA: ONCE AGAIN THE MOST IMPORTANT ART

By Nancy Condee and Vladimir Padunov

“Spring 1986” is the term used in Soviet publications to describe cultural events during Gorbachev’s first year as General Secretary of the Communist Party. “Spring 1986” marks a genuine *perelomnyi moment* (rupture) in Soviet cultural history: It celebrates the days when cultural breakthroughs began to happen too quickly to count. The Moscow intelligentsia watched initially with skepticism, then with curiosity, as changes—in literature, painting, music, and film—at first appeared as isolated totemic events and then were followed by more pervasive, mutually supporting moments of cultural reform.

Publications by Nabokov and Gumilev were followed by the appearance of other external émigré writers in official Soviet journals. The posthumous reinstatement of Pasternak to the Writers’ Union and arrangements, finally, to publish his novel *Doctor Zhivago* were accompanied by the rehabilitation of other internal émigrés, and the commemoration of Tatlin’s centenary was part of the first efforts at restoring the visual art of the Russian avant-garde to the history of Soviet culture. Organizing the first official rock concert to benefit the victims of the Chernobyl nuclear accident signaled the beginning of the integration of rock music into the mainstream of cultural life. The reappearance of all of Tarkovsky’s films shot in the USSR occurred side-by-side with the appearance of many lesser known films in the West that had been shelved for years.

LET’S STOP TOADYING

In many ways the trigger mechanism for “Spring 1986” was the unexpected outcome of the Fifth Congress of the Union of Cinematographers, held in Moscow in May 1986. The Union had been led since 1965 by Lev Kulidzhanov, whose early films represented the development of a new, aesthetically experimental trend in Soviet film: an unemotional, understated, neorealist chronicling of ordinary objects, events, and lives. Kulidzhanov’s subsequent career as a cultural administrator, however, was characterized by extreme cultural conservatism and a slavish obedience to authority. His speech at the Twenty-Seventh Congress of the CPSU (February 1986) was no exception. What was exceptional, however, was the interruption by Gorbachev with the caustic remark: “Let’s stop declining ‘Mikhail Sergeevich,’” the Russian equivalent of “Let’s stop toadying.”

The Union voted out not only Kulidzhanov, but also its entire Secretariat. This was a major event of political as well as cultural significance. The nomination of the Union’s new First Secretary, director Elem Klimov, was engineered by Aleksandr Iakovlev, then Party Secretary in charge of propaganda and presently a member of the Politburo. Iakovlev’s support of Klimov gave official sanction to the reforms in the filmmaking industry; it also sent shock waves through the urban intelligentsia.



Commissar

The Highest Court



Until his election, Elem Klimov was considered a maverick director, uncompromising in his disagreements with official commissions over cuts and re-editings of his films.

Klimov's first official act at the Congress was his call for the establishment of a disputes commission to review all films banned by Goskino for political, cultural, or bureaucratic reasons. To date, the commission, led by Andrei Plakhov, an editor at *Pravda*, has examined the bans on about 100 films, has recommended that most be lifted, and has effected the release of more than half of them. These include Andrei Konchalovsky's *Asya's Happiness* (1966) [SFIFF 1988], Gleb Panfilov's *Theme* (1979) [SFIFF 1987], Shepitko's 1969 documentary based on a story by Andrei Platonov, *Homeland of Electricity* [SFIFF 1988], two films by Kira Muratova—*Brief Encounters* (1968) and *Long Farewells* (1972)—Aleksandr Askoldov's *Commissar* (1967) [SFIFF 1988], Aleksandr Rekhviashvili's *The Way Home* (1981) [SFIFF 1988], Irakli Quiricadze's *The Swimmer* (1981) [SFIFF 1988], and Yuri Ilyenko's *Spring for the Thirsty* (1965) [SFIFF 1988].

Filmmakers have become the vanguard of cultural reform

In the midst of the political ferment of the past two years, what have been the significant moments in Soviet film itself? Primary among them is the candid approach by such directors as Rolan Bykov, Juris Podnieks, and Herz Frank in addressing social and behavioral problems of young Soviet citizens today.

The public furor surrounding Bykov's *Scarecrow*, in which provincial schoolchildren gang up on and torment a new classmate whom they mistakenly believe to have "betrayed" them, was in some measure due to the fact that the film anticipated the plain-speaking (*glasnost*) that became possible after the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress.

Scarecrow became what Soviet critics refer to as the *tochka otshchets* (point of measure) for discussion of subsequent films about Soviet youth of today. The topic itself is particularly explosive because the younger generation is



The Swimmer

often perceived, accurately or not, as a prognostic indicator of the health of Soviet society. It is for this reason that Podnieks' documentary *Is It Easy To Be Young?* (1987) is a disturbing film. The film's initial narrative traces the odyssey of a group of young rowdies through the Soviet legal system and the sentencing of one particularly destructive member to three years strict regime in a young offenders' colony for his role in vandalizing a train car. The film's focus, however, is broader than the fate of the specific youth, the incident of vandalism, or even the phenomenon of gangs. Its subject is the conflicting values and aspirations characteristic of Soviet youth.

CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

The Highest Court (1987) [SFIFF 1988], a documentary by Latvian filmmaker Herz Frank, was introduced to Western viewers at the 1987 Moscow Film Festival. It follows the fate of a young man whose antisocial behavior far surpasses the acts of petty hooliganism recorded in Podnieks' film. Frank's filmic interrogation of young Valeril Dolgov, convicted of murdering a trade-union official and her friend, raises challenging questions not only about the social origins of such crimes, but also about the rights of the public at large to engage in an open discussion of them. Noting the resistance of the local judiciary to Frank's film, Latvian film critic R. Viksins remarks: "There emerged a kind of archaic, indeed almost funny reaction, whose only explanation was that the organs of

justice had for years had a legal monopoly on the solution of those problems which Herz Frank's was now laying open to the verdict of a broad public" (*Rigas Balss*, 15 July 1987).

In a modest attempt to pursue this goal, some cinemas in Moscow are now beginning to distribute questionnaires at the door to encourage preview filmgoers to express their views in prescribed categories (the category of "Other" or "Your own comments" is apparently as yet *terra incognita*): "The characters evoked in me

a desire to be like them"; "Long, drawn out, and boring"; "It was entertaining and improved my spirits." Intended to assist in gauging the distribution of new films, (number of prints to be run off, location and number of cinema houses to show the film, etc.), these questionnaires have done little to accelerate the release of films for general viewing.

Unlike earlier youth films, such as Nikolai Gubenko's *War Waifs* (1977) or Evgenii Evtushenko's *Kindergarten* (1984), these recent

Beginning of an Unknown Era: Homeland of Electricity



films by Podnieks and Frank, as well as Ogorodnikov's *Burglar* (1987), Abdrashitov's *Pliumbum* (1986), and Shakhnazarov's *The Messenger Boy*, address the experiences of the young as they occur in stable, peacetime conditions, in a society that, according to official expectations, should offer its youth the greatest opportunity for a healthy transition from childhood to adulthood. Instead, as one young man in Podnieks' film laments, "We grow old, but not mature."

STALIN'S LEGACY

Another major issue that has come to dominate not only current cinema since the spring of 1986, but also contemporary culture is the legacy of Stalin's leadership, a topic that cannot adequately be discussed without reference to Tengiz Abuladze's film *Repentance* (completed in 1984, released in 1986). A mixture of symbolism, allegory, and fairy tale, *Repentance* takes as its subject the Great Terror, a period within the memory of many Soviet viewers. Much has been written about Abuladze's film in the Western press, but two points in particular have received little notice. The first is the extraordinary risk taken by Abuladze in pursuing a politically explosive topic while using an artistic form that is profoundly incompatible with the dictates of Socialist Realism. As the official Soviet Aesthetic theory, Socialist Realism calls for a "true and historically artistic depiction of reality in its revolutionary development."

A second risk for an audience that lost 20 million sons, husbands, and fathers to Hitler during the "Great Patriotic War" (1941-45) is the intimation that their own leader was cut from the same cloth. In creating the film's villain, Varlam, as a fusion of Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini, and Beria, Abuladze suggests a more sweeping message of human suffering than that endured by the Georgian population during the worst of its local purges. Although the comparison of Stalin and Hitler may be a commonplace of Western political thought, its exploration in Soviet society has historically been limited to conversations held between friends after several drinks and outside during the walk home. The simultaneous destruction of established cultural canons in both form and content sets *Repentance* apart from the spate of other recently issued artistic tests dealing with the Stalin legacy, notably Anatolii Rybakov's stylistically conservative novel *Children of the Arbat*.

If Abuladze's *Repentance* breaks the conspiracy of silence concerning Stalinism, Panfilov's *Theme* (released in 1986) resigns from another kind of artistic conspiracy regarding the massive emigrations of urban intellectuals in the 1970s. Panfilov's depiction of a writer-historian, a minor character caught up in the attempt to leave the Soviet Union, provides a challenging commentary on the complacent protagonist-writer, Kim Esenin, as well as on the literary establishment as a whole. Winner of the 1987 Golden Bear Award at the Berlin



Asya's Happiness

Film Festival, *Theme* is an important part of a larger dialogue between Soviet artists and their emigre counterparts.

CAUTIONARY NOTES

In describing the current state of cultural policy with regard to cinema, three cautionary notes are in order. First, the official support given to the reorganization of the filmmaking industry has not been matched by any attempts

accountability) system. Whether the economic bases—self-management and self-financing—of the *khozraschet* experiment will produce significant changes in the day-to-day monitoring operations of Goskino remains to be seen. In the meantime, Klimov and the disputes commission can only make recommendations; all action on these recommendations is left to the discretion of Goskino, the very agency that imposed the bans in the first place.

NO NEAT MODELS

Second, certain procedures for reviewing bans on films were implemented more than two years ago before Klimov's election. Alexei Gherman's films *Trial on the Road* (1971), *20 Days Without War* (1976), and *My Friend Ivan Lapshin* (1981) were shown at the San Francisco International Film Festival last year. Their unshelving in the USSR predated Klimov's election. Or take the case of Sergei Paradzhanov's film *The Legend of the Suram Fortress* (1985). The fact that he had the opportunity to make the film less than two years after being discharged from his second prison conviction defies easy explanation; the fact that the film had a Moscow screening in April 1985 (one month after Gorbachev came to power and 13 months before Klimov was anything other than a thorn for Goskino) totally destroys any attempt to set up neat models.

DOMESTIC PROBLEM/OVERSEAS DANGER

Third, and perhaps most important, the politics of culture is only rarely concerned with art, but it is always political in the profoundest sense: economic and propagandistic. The shelving of a film marks an automatic loss of approximately \$650,000 (the average cost of making a film in the Soviet Union in 1986) with no possibility of recouping the state's investment. In a non-profit-making society, the returns

to reorganize Goskino beyond the removal of Filip Yermash (director of Goskino since 1972), his replacement by Aleksandr Kamshalov (former head of the film sector of the Central Committee cultural department) on 29 December 1986, and the transfer of Goskino (together with the Union of Cinematographers and Sovexportfilm) to the *khozraschet* (cost-

**The politics
of culture
is only
rarely
concerned
with art**

on state investments in films are not measured in weeks or months, but in years. At the same time, any decision to shelve a film provides homemade ammunition for use against the Soviet Union in the Western media. The new policy, at least on the surface, attempts to address both the domestic problem and the overseas danger: The release of problematic films in few prints enables a gradual return on state investments and avoids the Western claim of censorship. Here, too, it will be important to watch the way in which the *khozraschet* system affects the production and monitoring of Soviet film.

It is specifically the cinema that has taken the lead in challenging "old ways of thinking" (*staroe myshlenie*) about the boundaries that separate permissible themes from forbidden ones: the devices and composition of film narrative; the organization of the entire film industry, from film crews and creative societies to the Union of Cinematographers and Sovexportfilm. Admittedly, the filmmakers have not succeeded in obtaining the release of every film shelved by officials at Goskino, nor have they been able to restore all the footage cut from existing prints by petty bureaucrats and so-called revisionary commissions.

THE VANGUARD OF REFORM

Even if First Secretary Klimov, the reconstituted Secretariat of the Cinematographers' Union, and the disputes commission have not

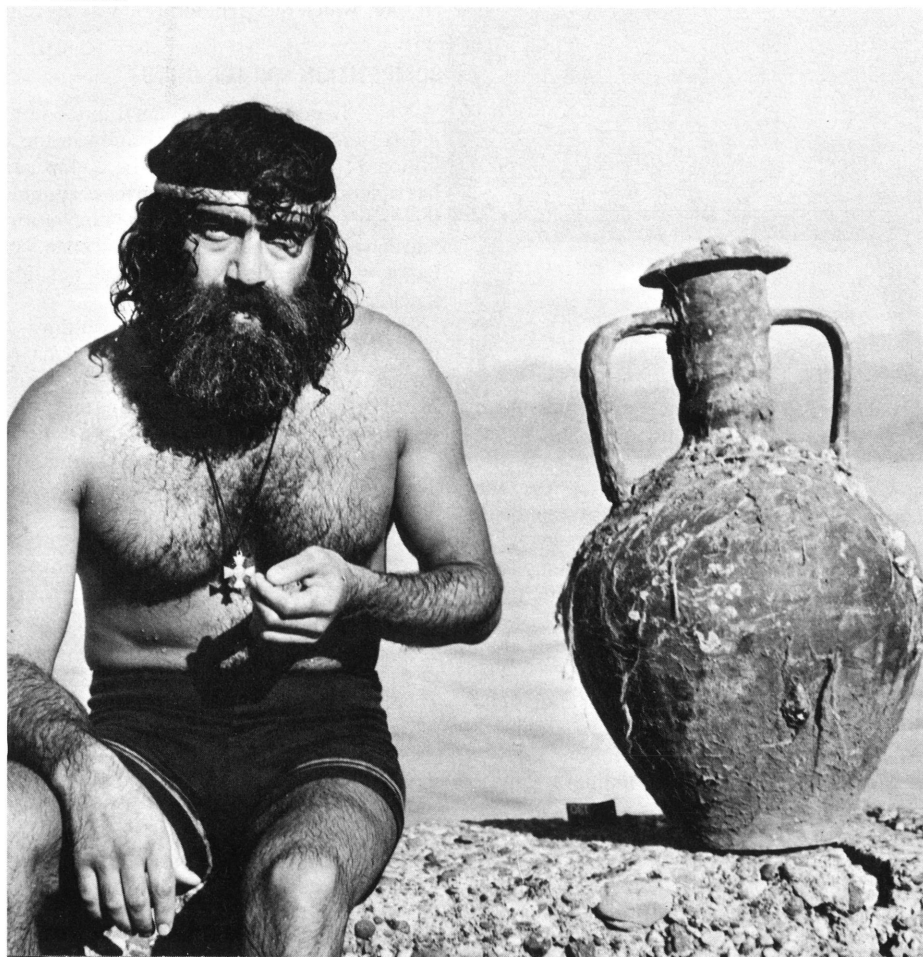
The Swimmer

ripped apart all the restraints shackling the film industry for decades, they have won a number of significant battles over the control of cultural production. More importantly, filmmakers have become the vanguard of cultural reform and have set major precedents both for themselves and for the other artistic unions (in particular, the newly created Union of Theatre Workers). In the nearly 2 years since the last Congress of Cinematographers, cinema has once again become "the most important art."

NOTE: The following films will be shown during the 1988 San Francisco International Film Festival: *Asya's Happiness, Commissar, The Highest Court, Homeland of Electricity, The Swimmer, Spring for the Thirsty, The Way Home.*

This is a revised version of the article "Spring Cleaning in Moscow's House of Cinema" that originally appeared in the 41st Edinburgh International Film Festival catalogue of August 1987.

Nancy Condee is an Associate Professor of Russian at Wheaton College in Massachusetts. Vladimir Padunov is a Fellow of the Institute of World Affairs in Hanover, New Hampshire. They lived in Moscow from 1984 to 1986 and are completing a book on cultural politics under Gorbachev.



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By Sally Jo Fifer

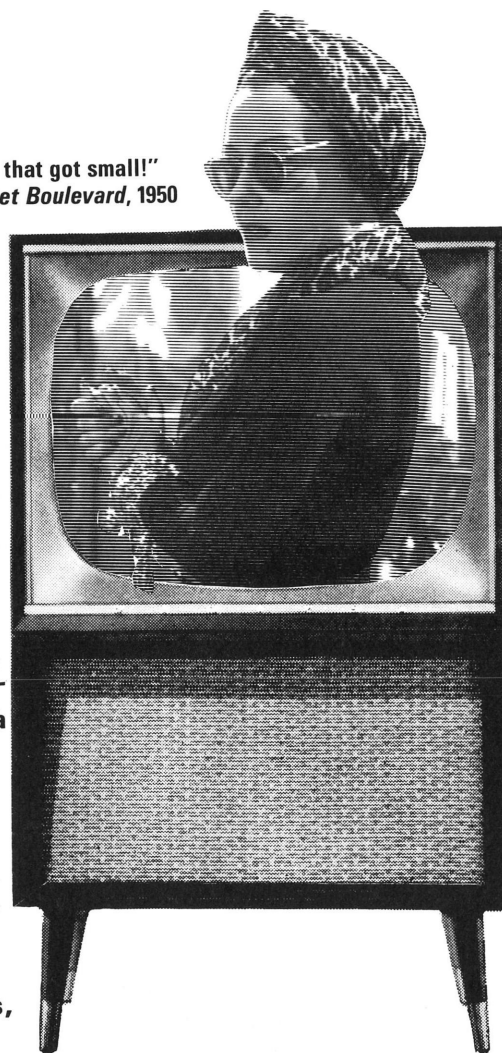
"I AM big! It's the pictures that got small!"
Gloria Swanson, *Sunset Boulevard*, 1950

TO
GO

Norma Desmond may not have realized just how small pictures could get. Home video is a peculiar amalgam—Hollywood splendor and a 9-inch television screen, Dolby sound and a Motorola speaker, high drama's pregnant pauses and the telephone ringing—movies in our living room. With 50 million VCRs sold in less than ten years, we must like the vantage point from our easy chairs. Why shouldn't we? It's convenient. From there we can cavort with Gloria Swanson while eating a Whopper and talking on the phone, all with the reassuring knowledge that our comfortable beds are only a room away.

MOM AND POP SHOPS IN PERIL

One-hour Martinizing, ATM machines, and home video—in America, when it comes to convenience stores, we don't settle for anything less than one on every corner. It didn't take long for the mom and pop video stores that pioneered the fast food of the entertainment industry to be eaten up by video franchises. And swimming behind every big fish is a bigger fish.



In addition to shopping at our corner video chain store, you can pick up a movie at K-Mart, Waldenbooks, Tower Records, and even Sears.

Videotape dispensing has also been the latest gambit for the do-it-yourself entrepreneur at the local cleaners and has even shown up in catalogues of multinational corporations such as American Express. Who hasn't gotten into the act? The number of outlets that rent or sell videocassettes has surged from fewer than 10,000 in 1981 to more than 50,000 today. The question is, with the proliferation of outlets and the convenience of bringing movies home, are we getting the videos we want to see?

The answer may be no. Finding a Bunuel film anywhere other than a specialty video store may be like trying to purchase fresh shrimp at the corner 7-11. Because the top-grossing 20 movies make up 80 percent of the home video stores' income, few places other than the video stores bother stocking anything

else. Mass merchandisers such as K-Mart carry a small inventory of only the most popular fare, which they rent for as low as 99 cents each.

COMPETITION FOR TOP GUNS

You may not even find Bunuel in the home video store. Cut-throat competition in the 8-billion-dollar industry to rent the 20 top guns has squeezed out the curators to make room for this year's franchise buyers. The competition may have lowered prices—big retail chains get better wholesale terms—but it has not done much for overall selection.

How is this possible when only two-thirds of the movies in the film vaults have been released? With home video as a business venture, franchise owners are unlikely to stock their shelves with classic, foreign, and art films. Home video store owners carry a product line; they are not collectors or connoisseurs. The bottom line: Shelf space is profit space.

Compare the Straw Hat personality with the film buff for whom cinema is a religious experience. The video store can be a rude shock. Skulking into a quiet dark theatre for a seat close to the screen is a far cry from crowding into a mobbed fluorescent-lit video store. There the film buff is forced to scan titles under adventure, children's, or romance. Movies are packaged like best-seller paperbacks: The classics bedizened with sultry gothic wenches, shoulders bared, the recent releases with blonde bombshells in red polka-dotted mini skirts adorning yellow hot rods. Perhaps it is not such a bad thing that K-Mart doesn't carry art films; the film buff might never recover from the purchasing experience.

NOW PLAYING: GREEN-HAIRED TEENAGER BEHIND THE COUNTER

The film buff may have trouble getting around in a video store, in which case he or she might ask for some help. That is, until locking eyes with the green-haired teenager who is earning minimum wage, is chewing gum, and is irritated at being interrupted while talking to his friends. At this point, the film buff may decide that it would be easier to take a suggestion from the cardboard merchandising in the window. A new albeit bad release is worth raking over the next day at the office. There is no excuse for watching something old and bad, and certainly no chance of exacting sympathy from anyone for the self-inflicted experience.

If there is a sign in the window for a particular film, you won't likely find it on the shelf. At 99 dollars a pop and a two-week life expectancy, recent releases are not bought in bulk. Most video stores cannot afford to buy enough copies to satisfy customer requests during a hit period. Too many initial copies mean shelf sleepers later on. The smaller the store, the fewer the copies are available. So much for the boutique experience.

IMPULSE RENTING

One thing these home video stores do know about is point of purchase. They know that 75 percent of their clientele come to a store and decide what to rent once they are there. The packaging must be alluring, the inventory accessible, the location convenient. They know that the average person is in the store about 10 minutes. (Compare that to 20 minutes in a record store and 35 minutes in a bookstore.) Computerized check-out systems ring up a customer in less than 30 seconds. They know that most people will not overcome inertia and march all over town to find the right film.

MINI HITS ON THE SMALL SCREEN

They are not the only ones who know this. The film industry, which initially predicted doom, has found home video business lucrative. Most movies fail at the box office. Less than 10 percent of films distributed by Hollywood studios generate enough money for the average studio movie to break even at the box office. But these movies have found a way to pay for themselves. Hollywood's biggest flops are becoming mini hits on the small screen. At the moment, home video revenues at 8 billion are nearly double theatrical box office receipts. By 1990 projected figures indicate that home video revenues will be approximately 13 billion.

Customers walk out of the store with their seventh and eighth choices and find that watching a movie on television is such a bastardized experience that one's expectations aren't terribly high. You can have a great time with a B movie and a relatively good time with one that is outright bad. The real home movie mavens are preteens and teenagers.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

When you compare a movie rental to prime-time TV, the quality of entertainment can often be a toss-up. Quality may not matter so much

San Francisco's Best Home Video Stores

Where you might find something off-beat or at least what the cardboard cut-out in the window promises.

CAVALLI ITALIAN BOOKSTORE carries over 350 Italian movies ranging from classics to recent releases. Many have English subtitles. Reservations. \$25 membership. Prices range from \$3.50 to \$5.00 for members and \$5.00 to \$7.50 for nonmembers. Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Parking limited to hazardous. No drop-off slot. 1441 Stockton Street. 421-4219.

CAPTAIN VIDEO, 5,000 titles strong, cultivates independent films. Here you will find local documentaries such as *Putting Up the Pickles* (Pickle Family Circus) and *Kerouac*. You can find low-profile independent features such as *Perfect Strangers* and *Emerald Cities*. It offers gay and Vietnam history as well as a wide selection of opera and ballet tapes. They have a shuttle service to their Colma Store, which emphasizes adventure films, and to the Lombard Street store, which specializes in comedies. They offer a free 250-page catalogue. Prices range from \$1.50 to \$4.50. No membership fee. Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 11 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. No drop-off slot. Double parking sometimes necessary. 2358 Market Street. 552-0501.

THE CINEMA SHOP specializes in exploitation films, war titles, old science fiction, teen movies, black cast films, and B westerns. These "classics" are from the thirties, forties, and fifties. Features a selection of war documentaries from the sixties and seventies, and a large collection of serials. Although the store carries 850 titles in all, their real claim to fame

is an inventory of 250,000 movie posters and photographs of which they have over 2 million. No membership fee. \$3.50 for a two-day rental. Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Street parking. 604 Geary Street. 885-6785.

GRAMOPHONE carries 3,000 movie titles and more than 100 magazine titles. No membership fee. Prices range from \$.88 to \$2.99. Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 8 p.m. Hit-or-miss parking. 1538 Polk Street. 885-3322.

JAPAN VIDEO, INC. carries 2,500 titles, 65 percent of which are Japanese films ranging from classics to popular recent releases. Approximately 100 have subtitles. Features Japanese animation and the complete set of Akira Kurosawa films. Rents VCRs and sells posters. Lifetime membership \$40. Prices range from \$2.75 to \$3.75 for members and a dollar more for nonmembers. Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.; weekends, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Parking validated for the Japan Center garage. 1731 Buchanan Street. 563-5220.

LE VIDEO has 1,000 foreign films in its 8,500-title library. Approximately 500 movies are French. Membership is \$35 and includes 24 free rentals throughout the year. Prices range from \$1.75 to \$2.75 for members and a dollar more for nonmembers. Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 9 p.m. Hit-or-miss parking; try Golden Gate Park. 1239 9th Avenue (between Irving and Lincoln). 566-3606.

continued

after a hard day at the office. If anything underlines the importance of convenience for consumers, it may be that over half the VCR owners use their machines to record and play back TV programs. For consumers who won't travel far from their easy chairs, video vending machines are just beyond the horizon. More than 20 companies are developing the equivalent of soda-pop-sized machines with names like Le Bijou, reminiscent, ironically, of the almost extinct repertory theatres (there are now less than 20 in the country). The vending machines stock hit product and accept credit cards for payment and deposit. Vending machines are currently being installed in hotels, apartment buildings, supermarkets, and malls. It is predicted that 60,000 video vending machines will be in operation by 1995.

Convenience is at the heart of American consumerism. We like new, fast, and easy things.

And this is the paradox of convenience. Convenience promotes quantity and accessibility but reduces everything to its lowest common denominator. If it is true that we already watch over seven hours of television a day, and that we are also supposed to eat, sleep, and go to work, we may have reached our limits for consumption. Either we begin watching videos more quickly, which advertising companies seem to be betting on, since they are producing commercials that can be watched on fast forward, or we slow down and demand quality and variety for our movie diets. Since video convenience, like fast food, is sometimes a necessity, why not order Bunuel-to-go? ■

Sally Jo Fifer is Education Director of the Bay Area Video Coalition and an avid renter of home videos.

**SAN FRANCISCO'S BEST
HOME VIDEO STORES** *continued*

MY FAVORITE VIDEO carries a complete line of RKO pictures struck from the original prints. Features musicals and horror film greats. Membership is \$14.95 with a free rental after ten. \$2.34 for members and \$3.29 for nonmembers. Rents VCRs and takes reservations. Sunday through Thursday, noon to 10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, noon to 11 p.m. Hit-or-miss parking. 1831 Market Street. 861-1986.

SUPERSTAR VIDEO, 4,000 titles strong, offers a 24-hour hotline for their latest movie hits. Customer service is at a premium with a two-week reservation privilege. No membership fee. \$2.65 per movie, 10 rentals for \$25 or 20 rentals for \$40. Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.; Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 11 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Hit-or-miss parking. 40857 18th Street. 552-2253.

VIDEO CAFE is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This diner offers a menu that includes burgers, espresso coffee, Rainbow ice cream, a Low Cal plate, and breakfast all day and night, as well as over 6,000 titles of popular videos. Membership is \$1.00. \$2.50 the first day and \$2.00 for each additional day. VCR rentals available. Public parking lot next door. 21st Avenue and Geary Boulevard. 387-3999.

VIDEO CINEMATHEQUE carries the largest classic and foreign film inventory for sale and will order any film with a quick turnaround. If you want to buy a copy of *Simon of the Desert* by Bunuel, this is the place to order it. Prices range from \$14.95 to \$59.95. Offers an exchange policy. Rents movies from an approximately 4,000 title library. Membership is \$3.00. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Parking lot validation. 1 Embarcadero Center. 433-1622.

VIDEO MART caters to every walk of life with a collection of over 20,000 titles. Well loved is their cult section, which carries such midnight specials as John Water's *Female Trouble*, Andy Warhol's *Dracula* and Ken Russell's *Lisztomania*, as well as the complete set of *Emmanuelles*. Has a great selection of musicals and children's videos, and they rent VCRs and cameras. Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 7 p.m. Drop-off slot. Hit-or-miss parking. 271 9th Street. 621-7772.

WHEREHOUSE carries a wide selection of instructional, children's, drama, comedy, and adventure films. Orders ten copies of all first-run films, so you should have no problem getting a copy of *Top Gun*, *Who's That Girl*, or any of the *Nightmare on Elm Streets*. Membership is \$1.00. Prices range from \$1.00 to \$3.00. Parking lot next door. 3301 Geary Street. 751-3712. ■

Thanks go to Peter Moore for his help in preparing this article.

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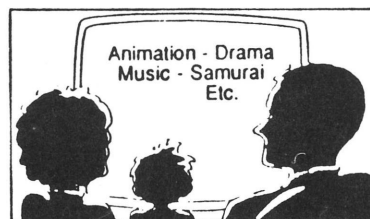
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The Kabuki 8 Theatres are located in a neighborhood known as Lower Pacific Heights. Japantown and the Japan Center are three square blocks full of shops, restaurants, galleries, a couple of hotels, more restaurants, florists, clothing stores and still more restaurants.

JAPANTOWN

The first Japanese arrived in San Francisco in the early 1860s, but it wasn't until after "The Big One" in 1906 that they began to settle in this part of the Western Addition. They built churches and shrines, and it wasn't long before the district became a miniature Ginza known as Nihonmachi, or Japantown.

It was from here that hundreds of Japanese-Americans were abducted and interned during World War II. After the war many families returned and resurrected their old neighborhoods. Japan Center, started in 1960 and completed eight years later, is the heart of the neighborhood.

Minoru Yamaski, an internationally known nisei architect, was the principal architect for the Center. The Peace Plaza and Peace Pagoda were designed by Professor Yoshiro Taniguchi of Tokyo, a prominent authority on ancient Japanese structures.

Landmarks within the Center include the Webster Street Bridge, a 135-foot-long covered bridge inspired by Florence's Ponte Vecchio; and the 14-story Miyako Hotel, which features deluxe rooms with Japanese-style sunken bathtubs and sliding screens.

The best bets for food in the Center include a country-style favorite called **MISONO**, known for steamed rice with salmon or beef. Prices are moderate.

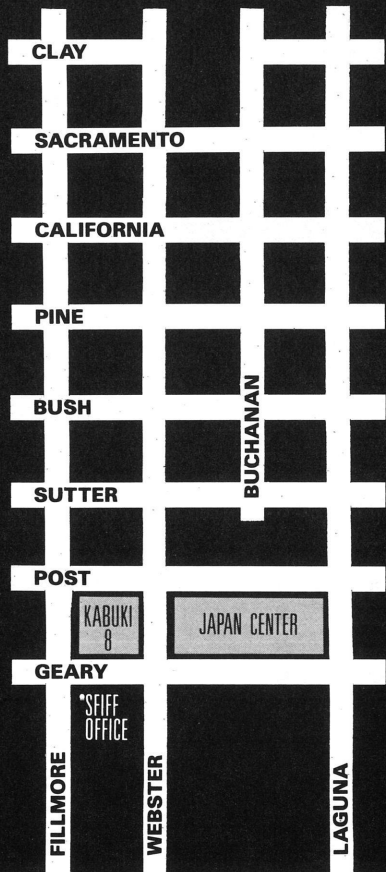
For sushi on the mall try **ISOBUNE** (Restaurant Mall, Kintetsu Building). Small boats float around a moat in front of you and on each boat is a different dish. You pluck the dish off the boat and enjoy. It's not only novelty, it's good. The prices are reasonable—\$10 to \$12 before sake.

Another sushi favorite is on Webster Street, next to the bowling alley. It's called **INO SUSHI** (1620 Webster Street). Simple and straightforward, it has an excellent reputation among fish eaters.

If you want to try a little more elegance and you've got time, stop at the **MIYAKO HOTEL** (1625 Post Street), the official hotel of the San

IN BETWEEN FILMS

By Mark MacNamara



Francisco International Film Festival. There's a full bar and continental cuisine as well as Japanese. Recommendations: The Emperor's Dinner: Soup and sushi, sashimi, Japanese pickles, chicken and beef terriyaki, tempura, rice, and tea, all served on a lacquered tray. Portions are small. \$28 for one. You can have Sukiyaki cooked at the table, a veal medallion or rack of lamb.

Karaoke is all the rage in Japan. It's worth experiencing it where you can sing against canned music. The best of the Karaoke can be found at **SACHI'S** in the Kinokuniya Building at the Japan Center.

There's a nice piano bar called **JIN-SEI-JUKU** (1746 Post Street). A lady sings, western repertory as well as Japanese. Guests can stand up and do theirs. "Hands down the best," is one review of this place. It's difficult to find. The address says Post, ignore that. Go in the parking lot between Webster and Buchanan. Better yet, ask.

Other stops: There's a wonderful floral shop called **MURATA'S** (1737 Post). Includes Bonsai selection. This is a must: the **KINOKUNIYA BOOKSTORE** (in the Kinokuniya Building). It is one of the largest Japanese bookstores in the country, but also has books in English. Great for culture, travel, reference, new novels in translation, and children's books. Also, videotapes, language tapes, magazines, art supplies, cards, and cassettes.

For gifts, try **MIKADO** in the Kintetsu Building: china, dolls, kimonos, tea pots, trays, vases, Japanese tools, and the Sanrio line of nick-nacks for children.

The **MARIE ANTOINETTE BAKERY** (located in the Kintetsu Building) specializes in Japanese baked goods, which are sweet but not rich, lots of heavy whipped cream. Pricey, but popular.

The **KABUKI HOT SPRINGS** (1750 Geary) offers Japanese baths and massage, including shiatsu. Both private and communal baths. Private means either male or female—no combinations. A private room includes a deep tub, a massage table, washing area, steam cabinet, peace of mind and a sauna. The communal baths (men on most days; women on others) are in a large tile-floor room with cold tub and hot tubs. You wash carefully before you enter either. It has jacuzzi and saunas also. Reserve private baths, 922-6000.

The annual Japantown Cherry Blossom Festival will be in full bloom during the last two weekends of April.

FILLMORE

Let's say you're going for a walk up Fillmore from the Kabuki Theatre. **ANOTHER WAY** (1661 Fillmore) features used bric-a-brac including a large glass jar shaped like a car and stuffed with pretzels. One of the first shops you come to on the west side of the street is a little pillow and pot store just north of Sutter, a place called **HEARTLAND** (1801A Fillmore). It has a very handsome collection of traditional and contemporary quilts, and unusual hand made crafts of wood, clay, and copper.

BOLLA'S (1903 Fillmore) offers men's and women's contemporary clothing. Shirts start at \$25; sweaters at \$50. There's always a sale section.

Now you're close to a minor landmark: **LEON'S** (1911 Fillmore). Focus Magazine gave it its 1987 award for Best Barbecue. Also, ribs, chicken, and links. Pork ribs at lunch are \$5.50; at night, \$9.50.

You'll see the **PACIFIC HEIGHTS BAR & GRILL** on the corner (2001 Fillmore). This is the kind of place you'd find on the upper west side of Manhattan: couches, good bar, good menu.

RORY'S TWISTED SCOOP (2015 Fillmore) offers ice cream/yogurt and accessories, which is to say dips, coverings, spoons, etc.

You're up to California and climbing.

VIVANDE (2124 Fillmore). The Zabar's of San Francisco, only Italian. Well known in the neighborhood, especially for lunch.

THE PRODUCER (2133 Fillmore), which is the right name because all you have to do is

imagine what Hollywood agents, producers, directors are wearing these days and you've got it. Prices start at \$70 and end at approximately \$500. Both men's and women's.

FILLAMENTO'S (2185 Fillmore). An upscale Crate and Barrel. Not as big, but the same idea. For example, an ice cream maker called The Big Chill for \$52.

Further up the street you come upon another bar and grill and a local favorite, **CHESHIRE CHEESE MADHATTER** (2213 Fillmore), for cheese and tea.

SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY THRIFT SHOP (2223 Fillmore). One of the interesting things about this street is the number of thrift shops: Goodwill, the Junior League, the Sacred Heart School, to mention a few.

Now you're almost up to Clay Street.

PLAZA INN (2301 Fillmore): tiny round tables in the bar, fried brie, and grilled eggplant. This is probably as far as you want to stroll if you want to get back to the theatre in time.

Start down the east side of the street. **LA POSADA** (2298 Fillmore), soft Latin music and Mexican food. **THE CAFE RESTAURANT** (2244 Fillmore), a favorite of Bea Pixa; **THE WAY WE WORE** (2238 Fillmore), all your old favorite clothes.

LA MEDITERANEE (2210 Fillmore), perfect for exotic Middle Eastern flavors. I recommend the Levant sandwich for \$5.50. You get levantine bread, cream cheese, herbs, cucumbers, feta cheese, and tomato.

DEPAULA'S (2114 Fillmore): Brazilian-African-Indian pizza.

MI BURRITO. Wonderful big helpings, all home made.

A Chinese restaurant on the fringes of Japantown, **MAY SUN RESTAURANT** (1740 Fillmore). Very casual atmosphere and reasonable prices.

DELANGHE PATISSERIE (1890 Fillmore). If you want French pastry, this is it. Owner Dominique Delanghe grew up in Loire Valley. Bakes everything on the premises; large assortment of pastries, cakes and tarts, and in the morning don't miss the fresh fruit pastries, kiwi fruit, apple, blueberry, and fresh squeezed orange juice. Most are original recipes.

Stop at **MARCUS BOOKS** (1712 Fillmore). An important landmark-open since 1981-it's one of the largest black retail bookstores in America with books by and about black culture. Regular customers include Whoopi Goldberg, Alice Walker, and Danny Glover among others.

If you've made the circuit, haven't stopped for anything to eat and need a quick hit of something before going back into celluloid surgery, stop at the **FILLMORE MARKET/DELI** on the corner of Fillmore and Sutter. "Custom built sandwiches" including corn beef on Wednesday, roast pork on Friday.

Full and happy? Now, back to the movies!

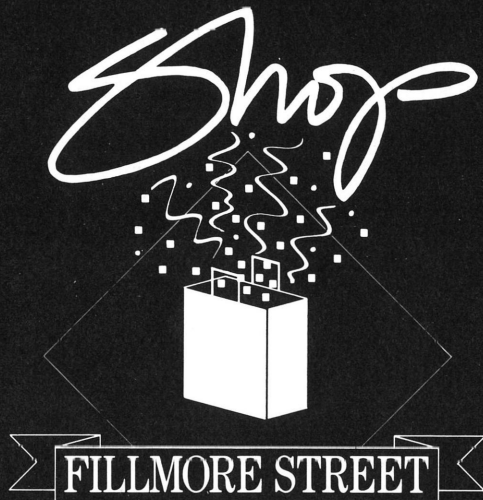
Mark MacNamara is a San Francisco-based free-lance writer.



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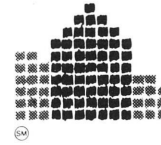
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WHAT DO THOSE CREDITS REALLY MEAN?

By Peter Moore

Although film is the most collaborative of the arts, it seems from the credits of recent movies that it's taking more and more people to make a film. In the fifties, if you blinked, you missed the credits, but nowadays they roll on interminably.

Many of the people who currently get credits have always been part of the filmmaking process but just weren't acknowledged before. There have always been assistant editors, gaffers, and grips, they just had a harder time convincing their relatives that they had anything to do with making a movie.

There are also a lot more people working on films. Some equipment wasn't around before, such as the mysterious Foley and the ubiquitous Steadicam. When films were made in the studios, there wasn't much need for location scouts, caterers, and other attendants to the movable feast.

But perhaps the real reason that it seems to take so many people to make a film today was best summed up by Jean-Luc Godard when he said "Movies are not made to make money, movies are made to spend money." One of the easiest ways to spend money is to hire a lot of people.

The following is an attempt to explain to you what many of the credits that you see on the screen mean. Some credits are governed by various union and guild contracts and are quite specific about who does what and what they're called; other credits vary from film to film, with the same function given by various names

depending on budget and whim. I've tried to take this into account and give variant meanings where applicable.

DIRECTION

DIRECTOR—The most important person on the set, the Director tells everyone what to do. If a director tried to act this way in real life, he or she would probably get punched out. Allan Smithee is the name listed as Director when the original director insists that his or her name be taken out of the credits.

FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR—THE "A.D." is the person who gets to yell "Quiet on the set!" The A.D. also makes sure that everyone knows what time to show up on the set and that the extras stay where they belong during crowd scenes.

SECOND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR—The "second" helps the first, which is as it should be.

THIRD ASSISTANT DIRECTOR—They do what they're told to do by the first and second assistant directors.

SECOND UNIT DIRECTOR—Directs the car chases and large action scenes. Sometimes the 1st A.D. is given this job.

SECOND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR—"Seconds" the Second Unit Director.

DGA INTERN—Directors Guild of America program that lets an impressionable young person hang out on the set and see what it's like to wield absolute power.

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR—See Director's Amanuensis below.

DIRECTOR'S AMANUENSIS—From the Latin for "slave with secretarial duties."

ACTOR'S COACH—Holds the cue cards for star who can't remember lines.

SCRIPT SUPERVISOR—aka Script Girl, Continuity. Stands beside the camera and records the details of each take, notes the clothing and make-up of the actors, records the dialogue as spoken, and notes departures from the script, tells the clapper boy what number to put on the slate, records the number of takes and their length and then writes all this up in the film log. This person is very important.

CHOREOGRAPHER—Tells actors where to put their feet.

WRITERS

SCREENWRITER—Currently enjoying a certain prominence due to the phenomenal number of poorly written movies that allows mere literacy to seem like genius. The more people listed as screenwriters, the less likely that any of them had anything to do with the final script.

ADDITIONAL DIALOGUE BY—Wrote the good parts but can't get script credit.

PRODUCERS/PRODUCTION

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER—Hopefully doesn't do anything. Usually either the person who put up the most money or in the case of a studio production, the person who'll claim the credit if it's a success.

PRODUCER—The person or persons responsible for putting together everything it takes to make a movie, from the artistic elements to the

money. Victims of a rather bad image (the cigar-chomping mogul comes to mind), they really work quite hard. Confusion arises because while the producer's function is essential, the person who does the job isn't always the person listed in the credits as the Producer.

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER—Credit awarded either for contributions of sweat or money. Typically, it would be someone who came in with money at a crucial time or a Production or Unit Manager whose contribution was particularly important.

ASSISTANT PRODUCER—Sometimes, the Line Producer who does not get credit, and sometimes the Producer's flunky who's keeping an eye on things.

PRODUCER'S REPRESENTATIVE—A relatively new position, the Producer's Rep negotiates a distribution deal for the film. Applies mainly to independent productions.

LINE PRODUCER—Responsible for all aspects of a product before and during filming on a day-to-day basis. Often one of the producers.

Movies are not made to make money, movies are made to spend money.

PRODUCTION MANAGER—aka Unit Manager, Production Supervisor, Production Coordinator, or Unit Production Manager. Does what the Line Producer does on small productions and functions as Line Producer for separate units on bigger shoots. Is occasionally rewarded with Associate Producer credit.

PRODUCTION ASSOCIATE—This person's function is unclear, but I'm sure that relatives are thrilled to see the name in the credits.

PRODUCTION ACCOUNTANT—Accountant.

PRODUCTION SECRETARY—Secretary.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS—Without doubt, this is the worst job on a film. For little or no pay, P.A.s are expected to be on call 24 hours a day to do whatever job anybody on the production assigns to them. Some crew members specialize in tormenting P.A.s, but remember, everybody was once a P.A.

PRODUCTION DESIGN

PRODUCTION DESIGNER—aka Art Director. Responsible, with the Director and Cinematographer, for the overall look of a film. Figures out what sort of house a character would have, what items would be there and so on.

SET DECORATOR—Reports to the Production Designer.

PROPERTY MASTER—aka Prop Man. Responsible for all movable, inanimate objects on the set.

CONSTRUCTION MANAGER—In charge of getting what needs to be built built.

CONSTRUCTION CREW—Builds what needs to be built.

STORYBOARD ARTIST—Puts the script into comic book form so that even the Executive Producer can understand it. The story board is especially used for action sequences to determine how scenes will be shot.

SCENIC PAINTERS—Paint scenes.

ART DEPARTMENT ASSISTANT—Worker ant in the art department.

MAKE-UP/COSTUME/CASTING

COSTUME DESIGNER—Decides how to tell the actors apart in longshots.

COSTUMERS—Help actors into their clothes.

SEAMSTRESS—Seamstress.

MAKE-UP ARTIST—Make-up Artist.

SPECIAL EFFECTS MAKE-UP—Cuts, bruises, and exploding blood packs.

HAIR STYLIST—Hair Stylist.

LOCATION MANAGER—Makes sure locations are selected and that the owners don't suddenly decide they need more money for their trouble.

LOCATION COORDINATOR—On big productions with multiple locations, the coordinator assists the Location Manager.

LOCATION SCOUTS—Find the locations.

CASTING—Works with the Director to select the cast.

BIT CASTING—In charge of the casting of the bit parts.

EXTRA CASTING—In charge of casting the extras.

PHOTOGRAPHY

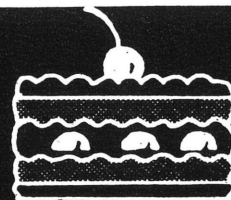
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY—The D.P. works with the Director and Production Designer to determine how the film is to look.

CAMERA OPERATOR—Runs the camera during filming.

FIRST ASSISTANT CAMERA—Adjusts focus during traveling shots, makes sure camera has film.

SECOND ASSISTANT CAMERA—aka Slate Boy or Clapper Loader. Responsible for keeping slate with clapper current.

FOCUS PULLER—British term for First Assistant Cameraman.

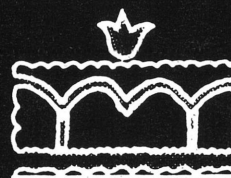


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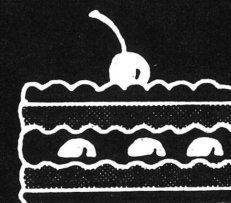
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STEADICAM OPERATOR—The person who carries the Steadicam, a camera with a built-in gyroscope, so that it seems to be floating and is overused in low-budget horror films.

CRAFTS

SOUND—aka Production Sound Mixer. Equivalent to the D.P. Is responsible for how the film sounds.

BOOM—Handles the Boom Microphone.

GAFFER—Chief electrician responsible for lighting the set. Under the director of the Cinematographer.

BEST BOY ELECTRIC—Gaffer's chief assistant.

ELECTRICIANS—Lights and wires.

GENERATOR OPERATOR—Another Electrician.

KEY GRIP—Chief stagehand on set.

BEST BOY GRIP—Key Grip's assistant.

DOLLY GRIP—The stagehand who pushes a wheeled platform that holds the camera for dolly shots.

GRIPS—Stagehands.

SWING GANG—Union crew members who are allowed to do more than one job on a set. Most commonly, they do both Gaffer and Grip jobs.

CRAFT SERVICE—Keeps everyone's coffee cup full. This is a harder job than you'd think and more important.

TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR—Teamster.

TRANSPORTATION CAPTAIN—Teamster.

DRIVER—Teamster.

HONEY WAGON DRIVER—Teamster who drives the PortaSan [portable toilet] truck.

UNION PUBLICIST—In charge of getting or avoiding publicity before, during, and after the production (predominantly during). Sometimes for the same film.

STILL PHOTOGRAPHER—Takes stills during filming for use in publicity.

POST PRODUCTION

POST PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR—Same function as the Line Producer for the period of post production. In charge of making sure editing, sound editing, and mixing get done.

EDITOR—In charge of taking pieces of celluloid and turning it into a film. Creative input varies. Some Editors are given great autonomy to shape the movie, while others work under a Director or Producer who have definite ideas about what they want. Traditionally the craft most open to women.

FIRST ASSISTANT EDITOR—In charge of keeping records of what bit of film is what. Often does actual splicing of film.

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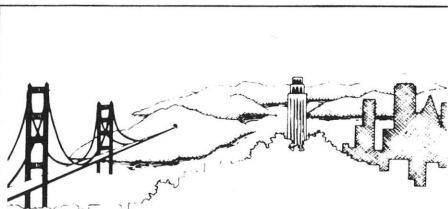
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SECOND ASSISTANT EDITOR—Helps the first assistant maintain order in the usually cramped editing room. Does a lot of rewinding.

APPRENTICE EDITOR—Starts at the bottom, watches, and hopefully learns.

NEGATIVE CUTTER—After editing is finished, takes the work print that the editor has used and cuts original negative to conform to it.

COLOR TIMER—A highly skilled lab technician in charge of developing the film so that when the Director wants that sky a little more Carolina than Robin's Egg, it is.

SUPERVISING SOUND EDITOR—More than just making the words match the actor's lip movements, the sound editor has to make all the sounds in the film work together.

ADR EDITOR—aka Automated Dialogue Recording, Dialogue Editor, Looping, Dialogue Mixer. This job involves clarifying the dialogue. This may involve re-recording and dubbing if, for example a character's name is changed after the film has been shot, or it may call for the elimination of background noises, such as airplanes flying overhead or squeaky stairs. In general, their job is to make sure that what we're hearing is what the Director wants us to hear.

SOUND EFFECTS EDITOR—Adds the crickets on a summer night, the wind in the winter, and the toilet flushing. Works from sounds recorded during shooting or previously recorded effects.

FOLEY EDITOR—aka Foley Artist. Works in a room with various equipment that a talented operator can use to create or recreate whatever sound is needed in sync with the image on the screen. A common sound put in with the Foley is footsteps.

SCORE / MUSIC—The composer attempts to create a mood through music.

MUSIC EDITOR—Does what the Composer does using music that's already been composed, most recently rock that's destined for soundtracks.

SOUND MIXER—aka Re-recording Mixer. Puts the various tracks (dialogue, effects, music, etc.) together.

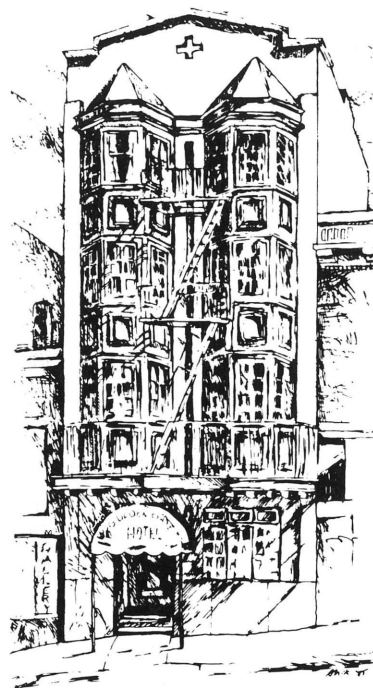
SPECIAL EFFECTS—It's difficult to do justice to the complexities of the modern Special Effects team without a lot more space. Even then, it's mysterious. They don't call it Industrial Light and Magic for nothing. ■

Peter Moore is a Bay Area film and video professional whose current project is *The Film The-saurus: A Guide to Film Indexed by Subject*.

Thanks go to Cristi Janaki Rathod, Steve Horowitz, Jeff Diamond, Michael Goodwin, and Anita Monga for their help in preparing this piece.



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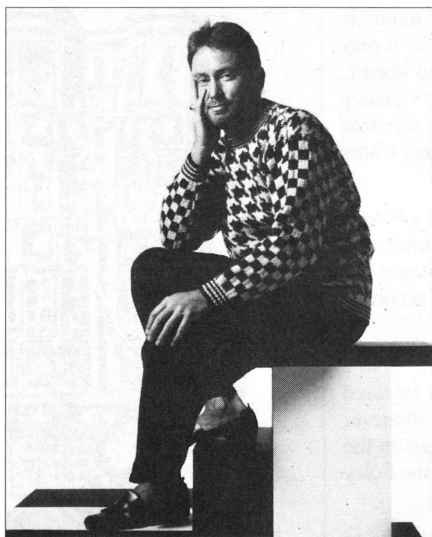
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Program Consultation and Good Advice

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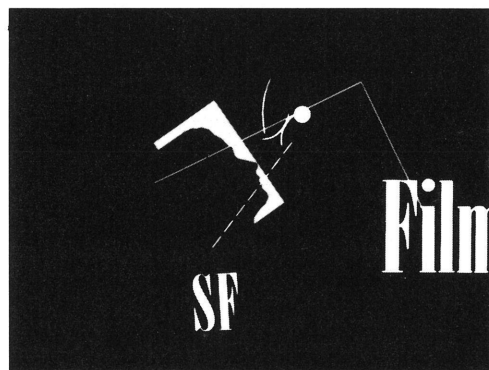
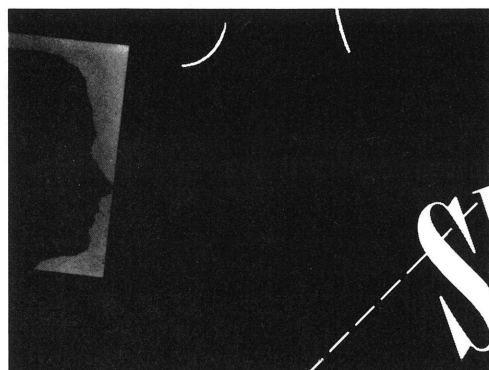
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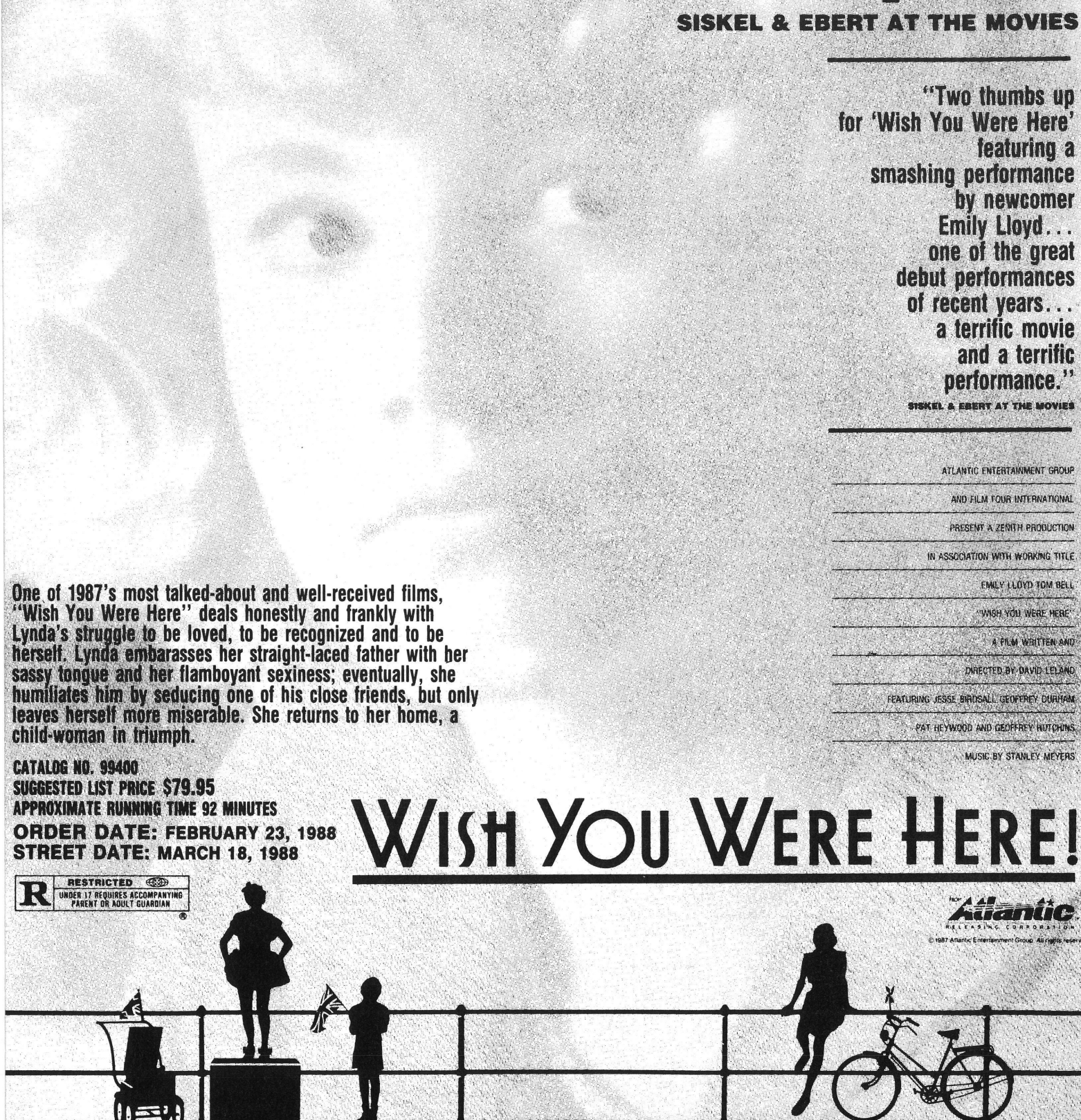
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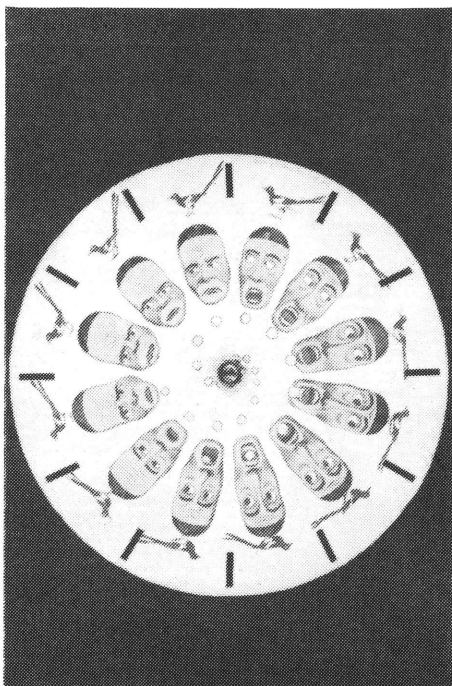
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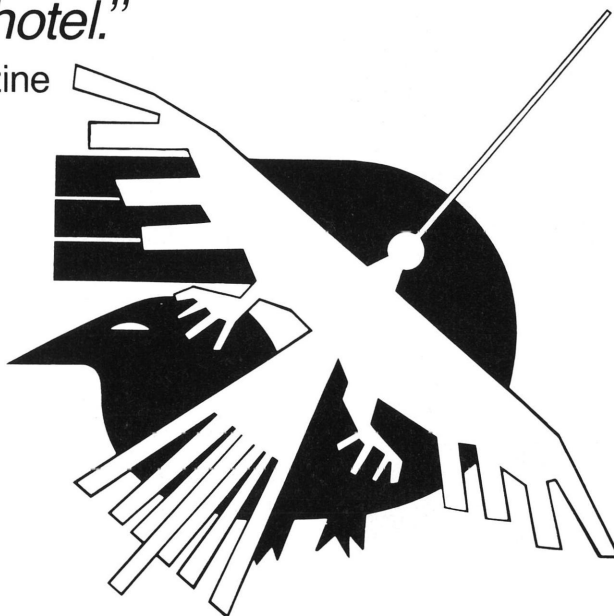
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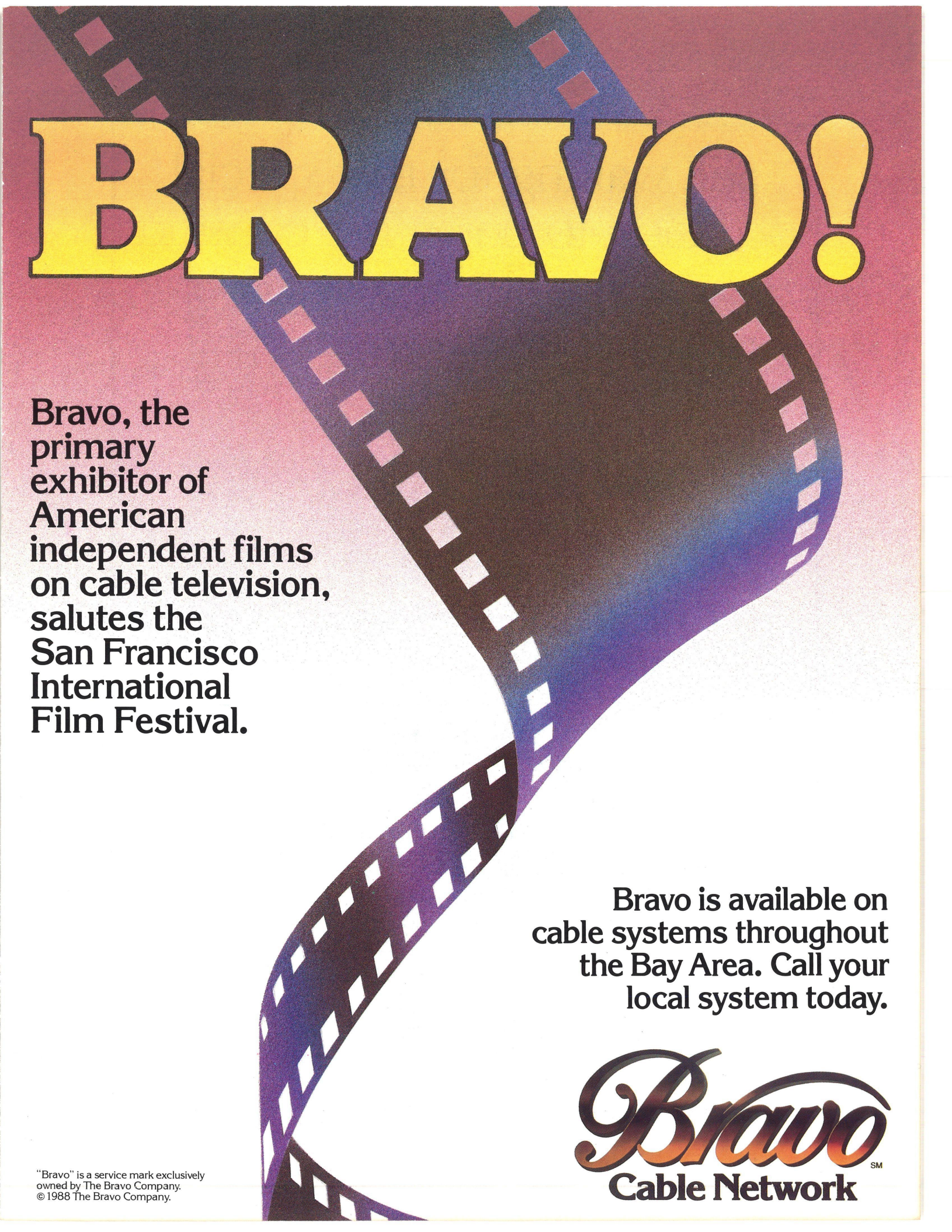


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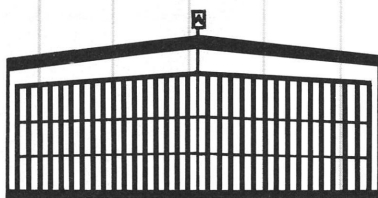
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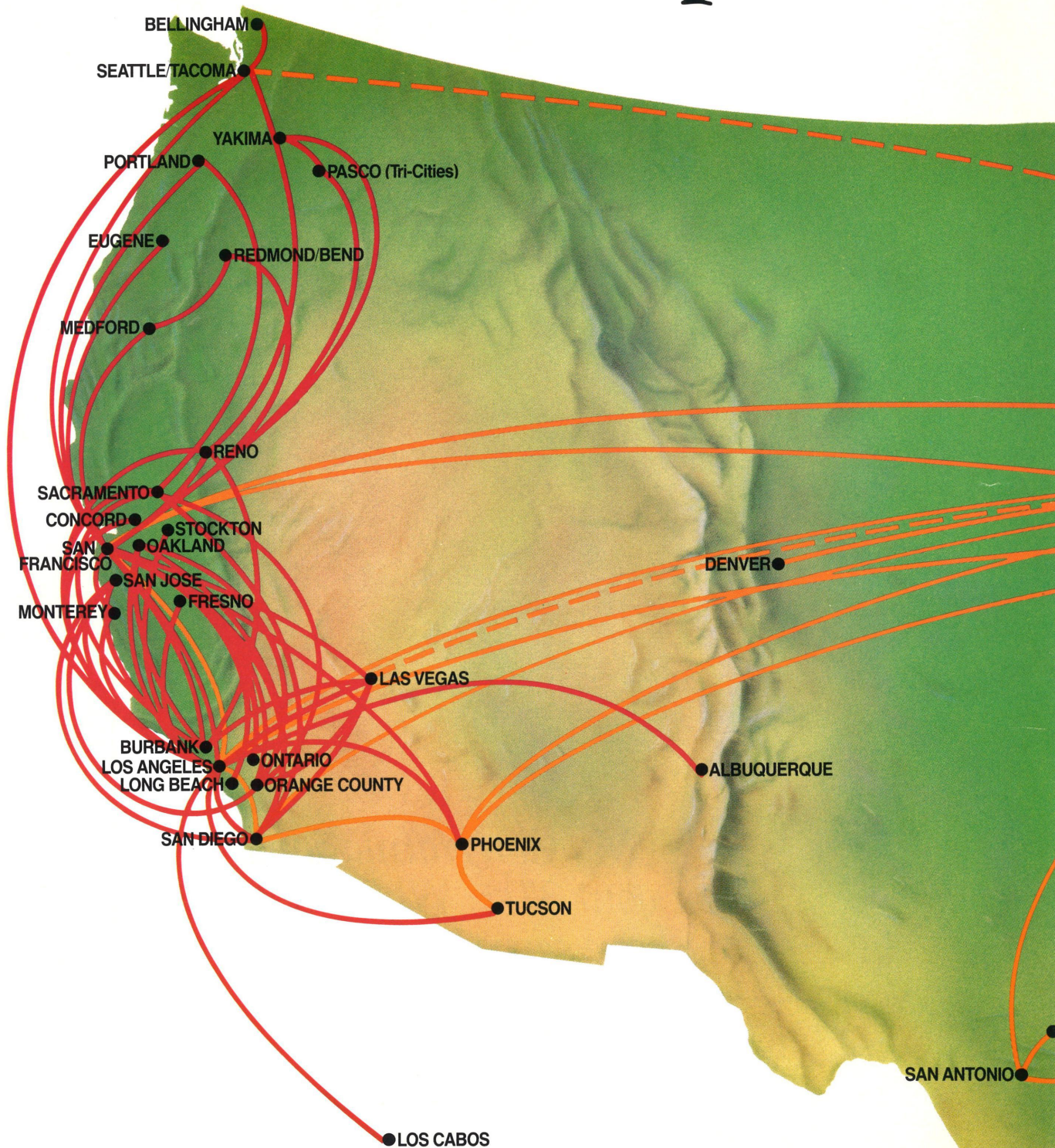
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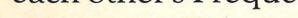
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